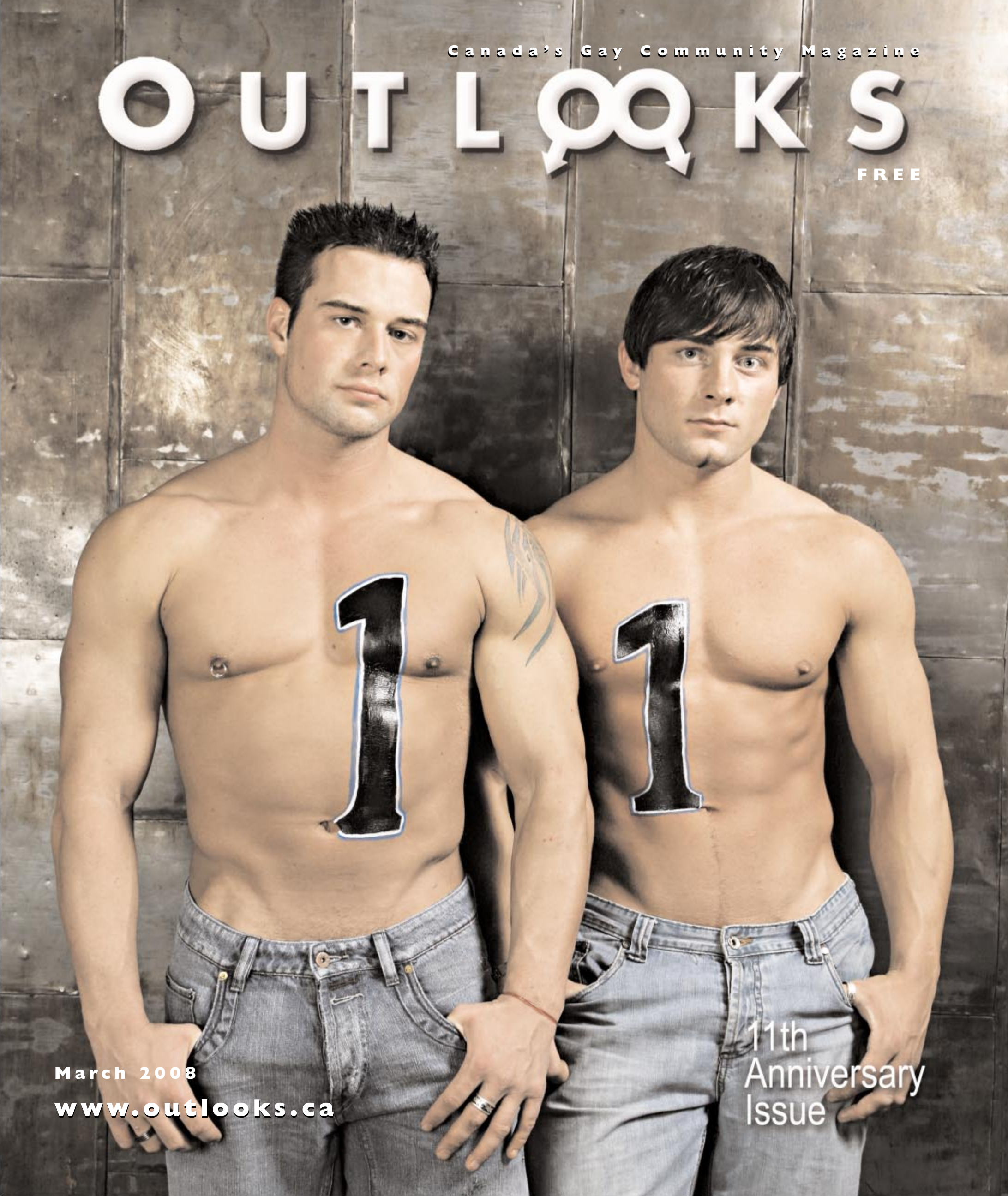
Canada's Gay Community Magazine

OUTLOOKS

FREE



March 2008

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March 2008

On the Cover

Donovan and Dalton, shot on location at Twisted Element.

Photos by: Tyler Stalman

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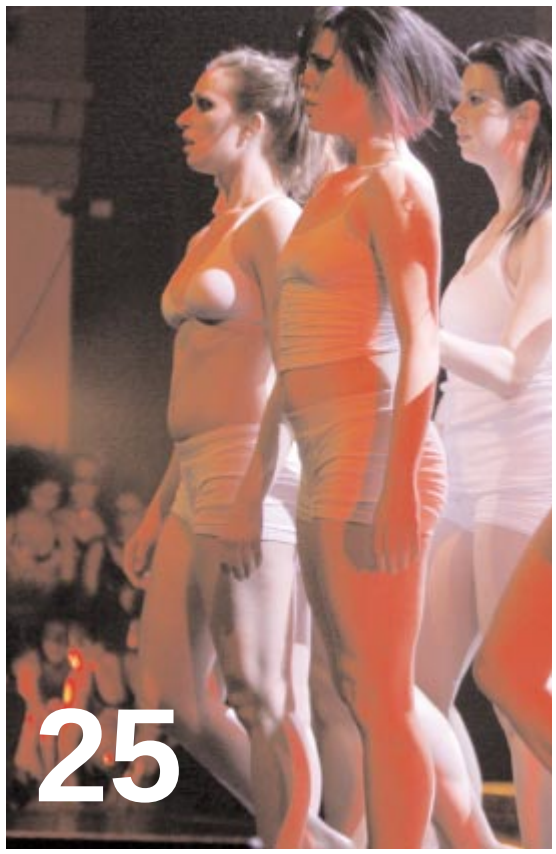
Once upon the River Danube, there were three cities—Buda on the west bank and Obuda and Pest on the east bank—which were amalgamated into the city of Budapest in 1873, simultaneously with the completion of the Danube's magnificent Lanchid chain bridge.

The Greenroom

Shannon McDonough is funny. She induces laughter that will make you choke on your turkey burger and have diet coke coming out your nose.



Calgary Cares

The best party in town is back this month: Calgary Cares, AIDS Calgary's annual fundraiser. This year's event is entitled "Sweet 70's: All in Good Taste!", a theme that AIDS Calgary's director Susan Cress has personally been looking forward to.

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Spring Fever?

By John Coulbourn

Having put the worst February in recent memory behind us, most of us now finally know precisely where on the calendar they will insert the tube, should the year ever require an enema.

And now, as we gaze across the barren wastes of March searching for some faint hint of green on which to pin our flagging and frost-bitten hopes of a warmer, if not a better, life, niggling questions arise and start to, well, niggle.

Questions like just how concerned we should be that the Anglican Church seems poised to disappear up its own navel (or some other even more nether-ish orifice) as it struggles with issues like gay marriage and Sharia law.

While we all applaud the fact that there are, in our midst, some few good men and women of conscience who are prepared to struggle with thorny issues of moral import such as these, sometimes we just have to back off enough to give us room to scratch our heads at the issues they seem prepared to tackle.

For instance: Why, in a church that currently seems determined to perfect the art of self-crucifixion as it struggles to reconcile its more conservative elements with the twenty-first century notion of same sex marriage and the fact that a loving God could in fact make both Adam and Eve and Adam and Steve, would they suddenly veer off into a completely unrelated and seemingly unnecessary discussion of the role of Sharia law—an ancient legal system by which many practitioners of the Muslim faith are governed?

Seems it's not enough to have a substantial portion of your membership threatening to take their sacraments and go home should you open your arms and actually embrace the gay and lesbian members of your congregation, even if in the process, you're embracing everything the good book has to say on judging and being judged.

So, in the midst of that whole debate, the Archbishop of Canterbury suggests that there just might be aspects of Sharia law that could be a good fit with life in England, as we know it.

Not surprisingly, Rowan Williams has done a bit of serious back-pedalling since then, but the damage of his ruminating, it appears, is going to be tough to undo.

I mean, while I'm no expert on either the intricacies of the Anglican faith or Sharia Law, I suspect that, even though there are no doubt a lot of elements in Sharia law that would just tickle the dickens out of opponents of gay rights (stoning and bodily disfigurement are apparently popular forms of rehabilitation in the Sharia codes), his high holiness—or whatever you call him—is still going to have the devil of a time sorting this out.

And speaking of fights, is it just me, or is there something missing from the current electioneering going on south of the border?

Mike Huckabee notwithstanding, I find it a little disquieting that the religious right seems to be sleeping through the current convolutions of the American political process.

It's not that I miss their constant evocations of the fire and brimstone they are convinced awaits me and my ilk—surely even God knows how utterly tiresome they can become—but years of babysitting in my callow youth taught me to get deeply suspicious every time the noisiest kids get quiet. Pleasant though it may be, it's usually a certain sign that they are getting up to no good.

Over the years, I've learned to appreciate the more vocal aspect of the self-styled and grossly misnamed Moral Majority, for thanks to them, it was virtually impossible for those who would impose their beliefs on society at the expense of others to hide in the tall weeds and set up an ambush.

And while we're on the subject of politics, just how big a loser do you have to be that the Canadians electorate could prefer the leadership of Steven Harper—a man who avoids lying to the electorate by the simple expedient of refusing to tell us anything—to what you have to offer?

Only Jack Layton and Stephane Dion know—and if they are talking, they aren't saying anything most of us are interested in hearing.

Oh well, as long as we've got Harper, we won't have to worry about where to insert the tube should the Canadian body politic require a high colonic.

Is it spring yet? ▼

John Coulbourn is a native Albertan who lived for many years in Calgary. He now makes his home in Toronto, where he covers performing arts for the Toronto Sun.

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One Last Time

By Roy Heale

Each year, as spring approached, for the past eleven years I have sat in front of my computer with a blank page in front of me wondering what to say to you, our valued readers, in another anniversary issue. This time—on the occasion of *Outlooks'* eleventh anniversary—it's a little easier, or perhaps more difficult, as this is my last anniversary edition as *Outlooks*' publisher. Yes, I really am heading for semi-retirement in Buenos Aires and a significant change of pace. As *Outlooks* turns eleven this month and my advertising and public relations agency SuperMarketing reaches twenty-five years old in May, I have decided—partly because my birthday this past January had a '9' as the second digit—it really is time to realise a few more life time dreams, ambitions and goals before it is too late or I am too infirm.

Firstly, let me say that it has been an immense privilege during these past eleven years to organise, develop and execute 132 issues of *Outlooks* with the help and assistance of so many talented gays and lesbians from all across Canada. It would take too many words and too much space to say thank you to everyone, but you know who you are and where you live in this vast country. However, I did think of a fun way to say thanks in this my last anniversary issue.

Our covers have always been somewhat controversial, provocative or downright sexy but with a free publication there always has to be a reason to cajole readers to pick you up and discover what's between the pages—hopefully the real meat of the story. Let's face it, sex sells and we tried to do that with a modicum of taste and dignity, promote local events, showcase GLBT community talent and entice you to want more. It worked. You picked us up and have continued to do so with avid loyalty for many more years than I ever dreamed possible back in 1997. For every cover photo that you have seen there have always been many more images that were great shots but didn't make it into print.

So this month—as I say a great big thankyou for a terrific eleven years of my life—you will get to see our great photos that were second, third, fourth....choices. Just imagine how many photos we have looked at over the years trying to decide upon the right cover photo. It's been a tough job! See the alternate photos on page 24.

But I sincerely hope that *Outlooks* has been more than just an appealing cover photo.

I hope that we have played a role in making it easier for you to to come out or simply live your life as a proud gay person. I hope that we have demonstrated that you are not alone and in fact you are amongst incredibly good company as diverse as any other ethnic, racial or religious minority. Our mandate has always been to focus on the positive aspects of gay life, demonstrate our diversity as a community and destroy the stereotypical myths about who we are, whilst avoiding gossip and innuendos about what goes on behind the scenes in any minority group. After all, let's leave that to the mainstream media who do such a good job of portraying us in a negative vein.

To this end I hope our eleven years longevity speaks for itself.

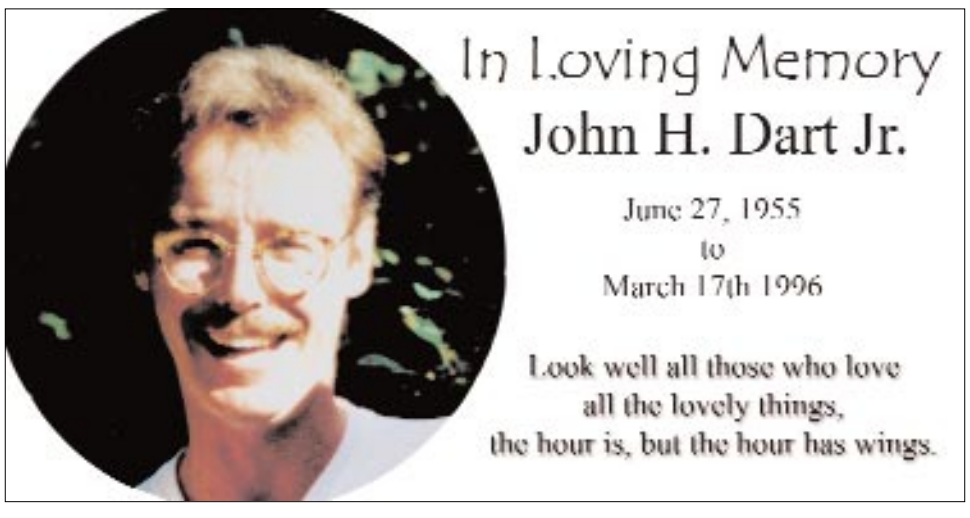
At this point I had wanted to announce the new publisher or owners of *Outlooks* but due to the interest expressed in the magazine, and the evaluation process, no new owner has yet been confirmed to carry the torch forward. I hope to be able to announce this in our June Pride issue—my last—and let you know who, if anyone, will be taking this magazine forward into the next decade as I enjoy a new life in warmer climes.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you, for perhaps the most amazing eleven years of my life and I can only hope the next decade holds as many magical moments for me as these past eleven years that have so enriched my life.

Thank you,

Roy

Birthday Celebrations.



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ESTABLISHED 1997

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Distribution ..... Hawk Distribution, Toronto
..... Gallant Distribution Calgary
..... S*A*R*G*E Distribution, Edmonton

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Magazine Fund toward our editorial costs.

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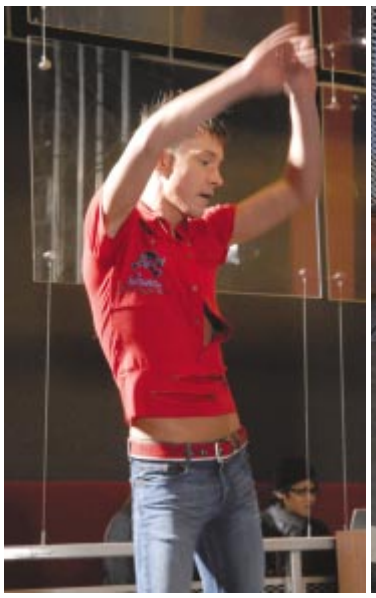
ISSN 1704-7927
National Library of Canada
Ottawa

Top Gay Model Hunt

January 20 at Celebrities

The models

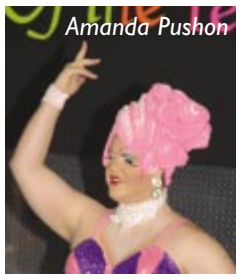


Terry Costa

Entertainer of the Year

February 7 at the Odyssey

Justin Tyme, JoanE & Carlotta Gurl



Amanda Pushon

Robyn Graves

Third Ring Leather Daddy

February 16 at Pumpjack

Lance, Michael, Gordon & Rob

Rob, Earl, Terry, Michael, Wayne & Anthony

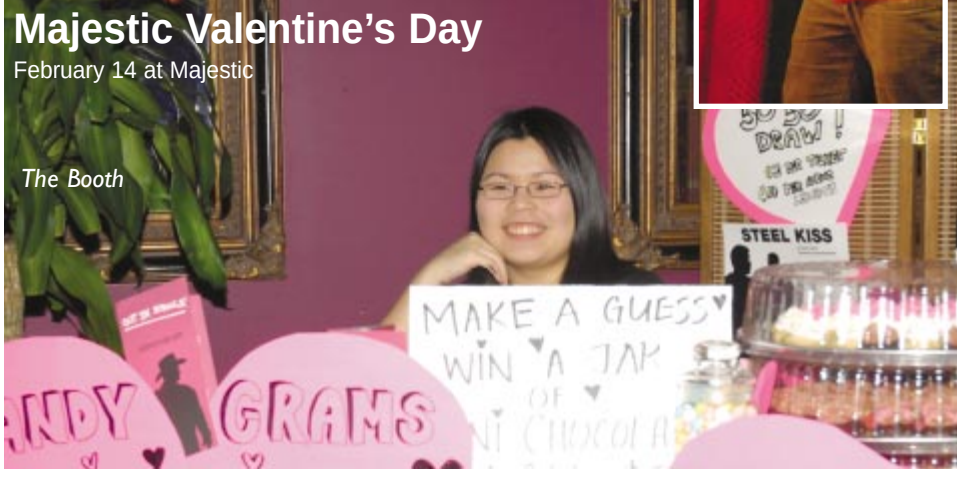
Planning an event in Vancouver? Contact Barry at 604.685.1377 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: Barry Piersdorff

Manager Deryk, Chef George & Owner Vince

Cupcake

Majestic Valentine's Day

February 14 at Majestic



The Booth

same-sex

CPP survivor's benefits are

the law

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George Hislop was the lead representative plaintiff of this significant case. He is pictured here with Ron Shearer (right), his partner of many years. George won the right to a CPP survivor's pension for himself and for other same-sex survivors across Canada.

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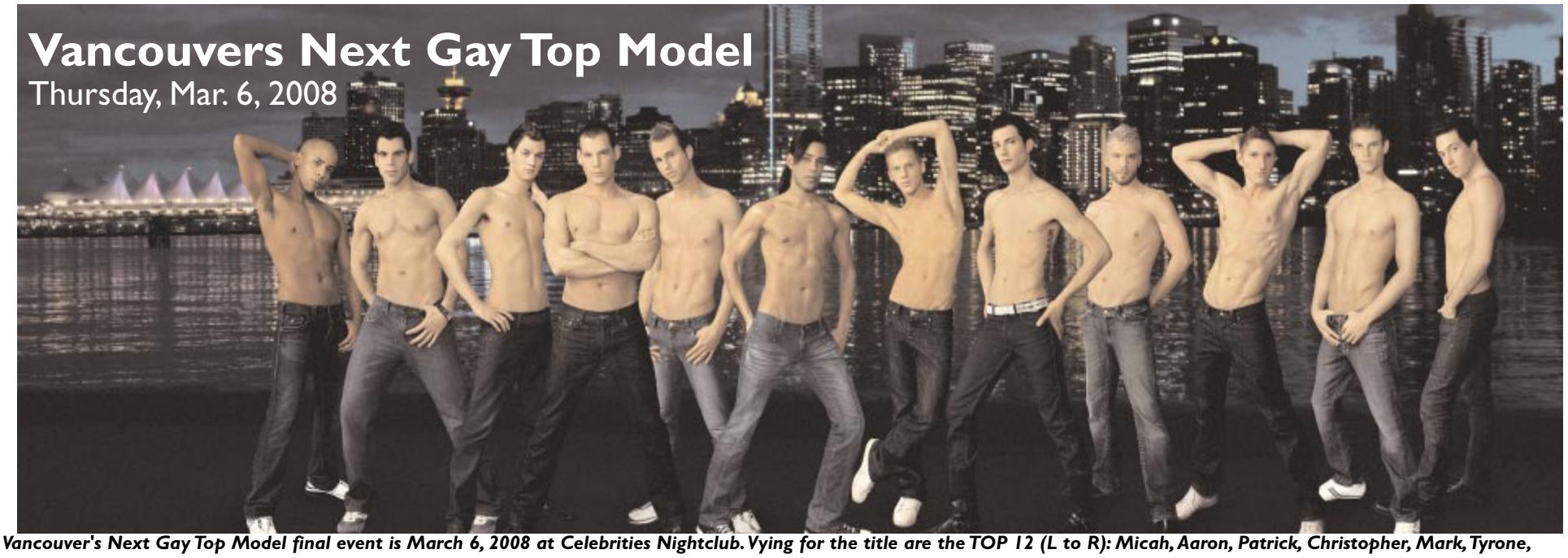

Vancouver's Next Gay Top Model final event is March 6, 2008 at Celebrities Nightclub. Vying for the title are the TOP 12 (L to R): Micah, Aaron, Patrick, Christopher, Mark, Tyrone, Pierson, Rhys, Dustin RT, Darren, Chad, Peter. All details regarding the contest, tasks, photos and final theatrical event can be found at gaytopmodel.com. Photo by Nicholas Jang.

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***The Writer** oil, 30" x 24"*

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Over the rainbow

By Ralph Higgins

Once a month on CKDU, the radio station from Dalhousie University in Halifax, a friendly, low-pitched voice invites listeners to join in for a few hours of music and chat on a program called *Over The Rainbow*. The voice belongs to Denise Holliday, a transgendered woman, and her calm, assured manner gives little evidence of the event-filled, sometimes tumultuous years that lay behind her.

The boy child who was born in Sunderland, a small city of shipyards and coalmines in the Northeast of England, showed little sign that later, as a woman named Denise, he would be involved in writing a monthly transgender column in a queer newspaper, give workshops or answer questions on transgender issues on a toll free phone line in Canada. He was a well-behaved child who preferred outdoor activities and as a young child developed people skills with jobs like delivering milk and selling firewood door to door. Yet, he was different; he felt it within himself. This gender dysphoria was present from his earliest years but he mostly succeeded in hiding it, from himself and from others. For a while.

Denise Holliday

Shortly before turning eighteen, he enlisted in the Royal Army Veterinary Corp, "more to run away from me than to be in the military," Denise now realizes. "I became a professional dog trainer and since animals were one thing I related to, it was work I loved." After more than six years of service, working as a dog trainer, heavy goods driver and a tour of duty in Northern Ireland, a curvature of the spine cut short his career and he received an honourable discharge.

While still in the military, some life-changing choices had already come up. "[I] had to make decisions. Should I first discover Denise? Secondly, [whether] to have my own children. The desire to have my own children was so powerful that I chose to ignore the other since doing the first would make the second impossible. I literally did a thorough marketing job for a woman who I felt would make a perfect mother. It was one of the best jobs I ever did. We had been married three months when I explained as much as I knew about myself to my spouse, a woman that I had by then fallen deeply in love with. She chose to stay and we've worked through many issues in our thirty-eight years since."

Two years after marriage, the couple and baby son immigrated to Canada, settling in rural Nova Scotia. The next decades were occupied with earning a living for a growing family. A large variety of jobs followed, from meat cutter, forestry worker, salesman, to owning a printing business and running two newspapers. But no matter how busy the outer life, the internal struggle grew more difficult to contain. Denise was pushing to be born.

At the age of fifty, in the midst of great financial and emotional difficulties, the father of three began the process of transition. The woman who had been living inside all those years finally had a physical place in the world.

And as Denise, she was nearly unemployable. Workplace discrimination against transgender people is widespread, although nearly impossible to prove. In spite of her many years of experience, skill and education, Denise took a job as a cleaner at the airport in order to get back her strength and to gain some employment history as a woman. Today Denise is still searching for decent paid employment. She points out that sixty per cent of trans people live on less than $10,000.00 a year. And there are other prices to pay too. "We lose family, self-respect and sometimes our humanity. Twenty per cent of kids living on the streets in North America identify as trans." Denise has been verbally threatened with physical violence by complete strangers who told her she was "inhuman trash" to be cleared away. Little wonder the suicide rate in the trans community is estimated at six times the national average.

The need to belong, to fit in somewhere often leads FTM (female to male) transgendered people to associate with lesbians while some MTF (male to female) find company with drag queens. But the gender issues of trans folk are very different than the sexual orientation issues of gays and lesbians.

Nor is there universal acceptance by the queer community either, where Denise finds roughly the same amount of transphobia as in the general population. There is a preconception that all the several communities that exist under the general umbrella of GLBT know and accept each other; that bisexual men understand lesbian issues, that gay men interact well with transgender people, etc. The reality, Denise says, is quite different but is based on lack of knowledge and connection on all sides. She tells a humourous story of the first time she decided to put her newspaper experience to work helping with the layout of *Wayves*, the queer newspaper serving Atlantic Canada. While there are lesbians who form part of the volunteer team of *Wayves*, on this particular afternoon there were only gay men there when Denise arrived. Somewhat ill at ease for fear of inadvertently saying something offensive, she remained uncharacteristically quiet and subdued. At the next meeting, she finally just blurted out how she was feeling, whereupon the men all broke up laughing and said they had been acting exactly the same way for fear of offending her. The process of getting to know each other began.

Realizing the need to get good information out to people, when the Wayves team mentioned they were always looking for copy, Denise suggested a column based on her diary which she was already writing "when things were bad" and the monthly Transgender Diary began, a window into the daily struggles and occasional triumphs of transgender life.

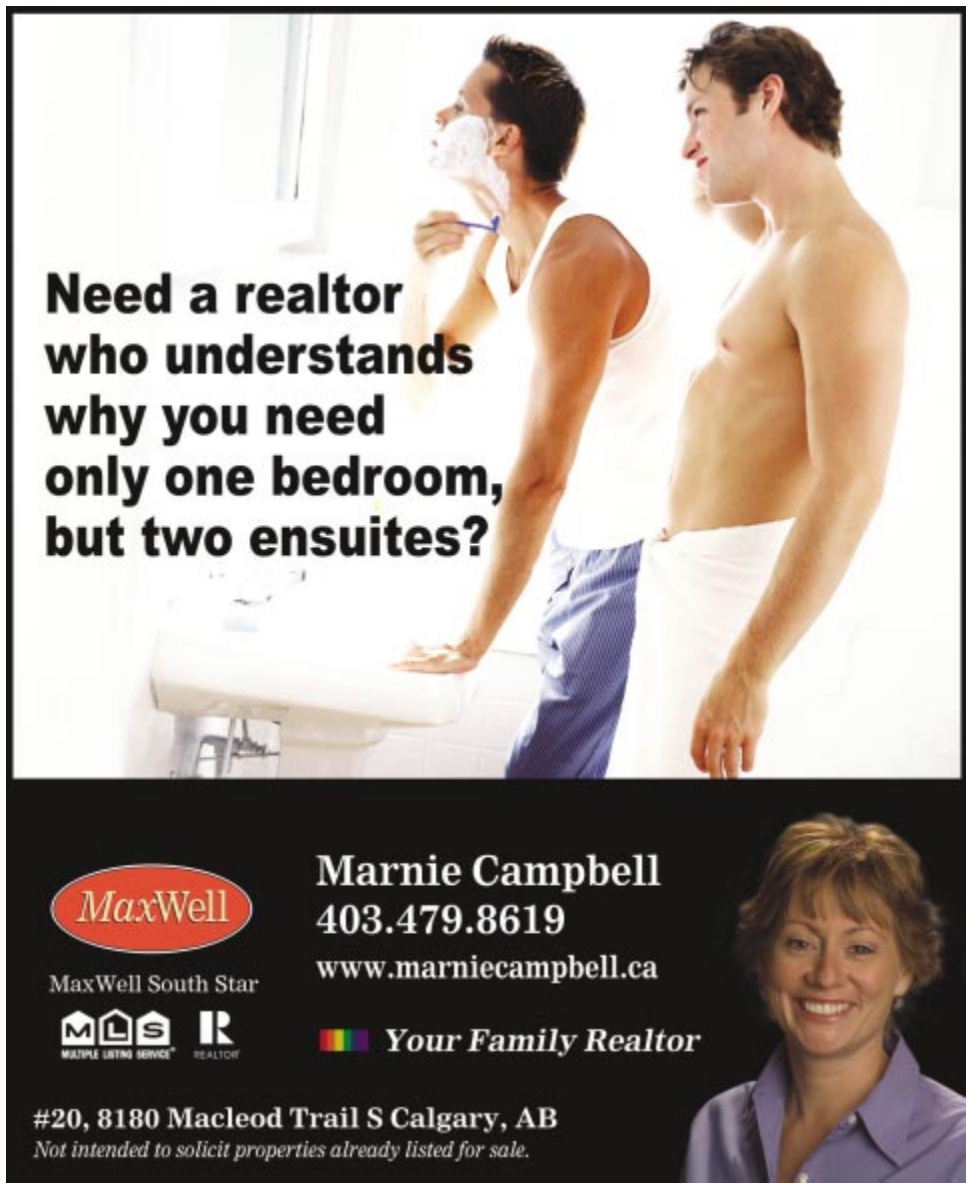
Denise also started giving workshops entitled Maritime Transgender Workplace Solutions Project to groups as varied as college students and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Films like *Normal*, *Boys Don't Cry* and *Transamerica* have raised the profile of transgender issues but there remains much to be done. "Among the FTM contacts I speak with," says Denise, "the fear of being killed is often expressed. MTFs suffer too and they also suffer as women. Black MTFs suffer the most violence in any TG/TS group."

Because of being a public person with her transition, Denise soon became the person others came to when they had questions. After working with Executive Director of PFLAG, Cherie MacLeod, a toll free phone line has been set up by PFLAG so that Denise can answer questions from across Canada.

At the age of sixty, Denise Holliday is a parent, grandparent, and spouse who volunteers as radio host, writer, and workshop presenter. She can be contacted through **PFLAGCanada.ca** and also on the toll free number 1-888-822-9494. ▼

Ralph Higgins is a writer, columnist and book/movie reviewer living in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.

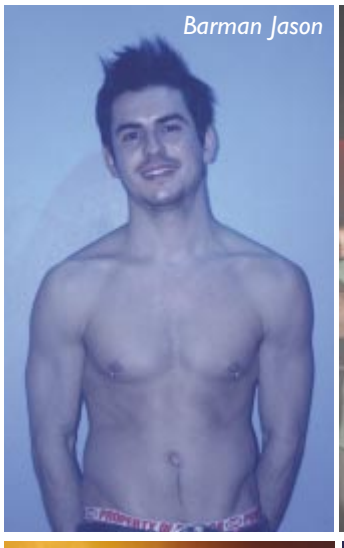


Unity II

February 14 at Unity

DJ Bobzilla

Erick & Joel



Barman Jason

Julie & André

Tracy Young

Luisa Pepe

Valentine's at Cabaret Mado

February 14 at Cabaret Mado

Martin & Hervé

Planning an event in Montreal? Contact David at in@out.caand he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: Cesar Ochoa

Budapest-
Queen of the Danube

By Roy Heale

Once upon the River Danube, there were three cities—Buda on the west bank and Obuda and Pest on the east bank—which were amalgamated into the city of Budapest in 1873, simultaneously with the completion of the Danube's magnificent Lanchid chain bridge. Today, with over two thousand years of history, this city is one of the most beautiful capitals in Europe and the modern architecture blends with the rich, historic past of centuries-old castles, palaces and parliament buildings on both banks of the river. It is often referred to as the Queen of the Danube and it's easy to feel like royalty as you stroll along the cobbled streets of the Castle District and imagine those who lived here hundreds of years ago. Today, Budapest is a city of almost two million residents, offering the gay traveller every modern convenience, a vibrant nightlife and their own unique descriptive word "meleg", coined around 1990 as a non-discriminative description for homosexuals.

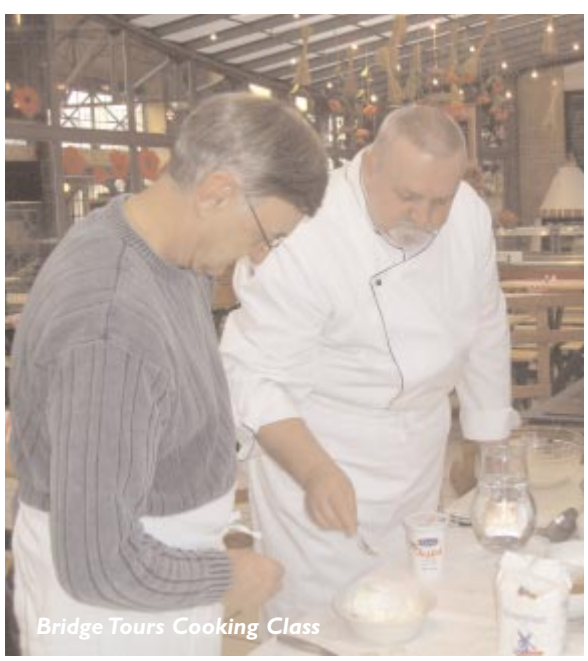
The city covers an area of two hundred square miles. Flowing north to south through the centre of the city is the mighty River Danube. Buda and Óbuda, comprising roughly a third of the total, are situated mainly in the hills to the west, with commercial Pest on the plains to the east. There are three islands—Óbuda Island, Margaret Island and Csepel Island—and nine bridges, two of which carry railway lines. Budapest possesses a rich and fascinating history as well as a vibrant cultural heritage. Recognizing the unique value of its traditions it has managed to maintain its magic and charm, and honestly earns its nickname as the Queen of the Danube. It has also been called the City of Spas, as there are a dozen thermal baths complexes served by over one hundred natural thermal springs and hundreds of underground caves, four of which are open to the public.

Budapest is renowned worldwide for the therapeutic and healing powers of the thermal waters and many tourists come just for a spa vacation. The centrally located Gellert thermal baths and pools are situated on the Buda side of the Szabadsag Bridge and are one of the largest spa complexes and hotels in the city. Here you can enjoy the waters, massages, steam rooms, indoor and outdoor pools, solarium, naturist sunbathing terraces and a cocktail lounge. A day at the spa will be a unique experience and not at all like the local spa at home. Of course the gay community is served by the Magnum Sauna, Sauna 69, and Kiraly Furdo Baths where the thermal springs are not the main attraction but the relaxation is guaranteed. Whichever spas you might choose to visit, this will be a highlight of your trip to Budapest.

One of the most enjoyable ways to see the city is a Danube River cruise by night on the Legenda glass bubble enclosed boat with a four-course candlelit dinner and live music. As you glide gently along the Danube you will see the city's famous monuments festooned with their dramatic, colourful floodlights including the Opera House, the Royal Place, the Parliament Buildings, the Castle District, the Lanchid Bridge, the Freedom Monument and the Palace of Arts—just to name a few of the spectacular sights. This is a magical introduction to the city and will leave you with a list of places to visit during the daylight hours on your vacation. The gourmet dinner and live music will enchant you as the sights along the embankment introduce you to the magic of Budapest.

From Clark Adam Square at the Buda end of the Chain Bridge you can ride the Funicular—opened in 1870 when this tram lift was the only way up the hill to the Castle—which affords a beautiful view of the city while saving a long uphill walk to the Castle District. At the end of this short ride is a charming historic neighbourhood situated on top of a hill overlooking the Danube, Buda and Pest with spectacular views and panoramas of the city below. Here you can easily spend the whole day wandering the cobbled streets and visiting the Royal Place, the old houses and churches or enjoying refreshments at an outdoor cafe. In the summertime there are many festivals, which will introduce you to the culture that is Hungary at its most charming. There are two-hour walking tours that will guide you through the entire district and its rich history. Some of the best restaurants specialising in local cuisine can be found in this district. Whatever your pleasure, a day in the Castle District is a must during any visit to Budapest.

Central Market Hall



Bridge Tours Cooking Class

Lanchid 19 Design Hotel

The City Park Varosliget was completed in 1896 for Hungary's millennium celebrations and is a favorite gathering place for both locals and tourists. This 302-acre park includes many attractions, sculptures, a large pond and historic sites for a full day of entertainment. The park's main entrance is through Heroes' Square, one of Hungary's World Heritage Sites. At the square you can find the Millennium Monument, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Palace of Art, all worthy of a visit. Another centerpiece of Varosliget is the rather unusual Vajdahunyad Castle, originally built of cardboard and wood in honour of the Millennium. The structure was built in a wide variety of architectural styles ranging from Romanesque to Gothic, intended to represent each century since the arrival of the Magyars. Due to its immense popularity it was later rebuilt in brick and today it is a major attraction of City Park. The large pond is a great place to rent a rowboat in the summer or during winter enjoy the largest outdoor skating rink in Central Europe. Home to the Budapest Grand Circus, the Botanical Gardens, the Municipal Zoological Garden, and several Museums the Varosliget is truly a unique way to spend a day in a city parkland full of diverse entertainment.

Shopping in Budapest has changed dramatically since the days of communism and now the city boasts a mixture of traditional Hungarian shops blended with today's trendy boutiques and department stores. Antique stores abound and arts and crafts are a Hungarian tradition. The Central Market Hall is a place where anything and everything Hungarian can be found from foods to wines and liqueurs and local crafts. Here you can also enjoy the challenge of a cooking competition called the "Wooden Spoon Grand Prix". Anyone can compete in the challenge to make real Hungarian Goulash—a soup not a stew—and cottage cheese pancakes under the direction of an expert chef. These daily contests are organised by Bridge Tours and held at the Fakanal (Wooden Spoon) Restaurant in the Central Market Hall. There are also special samplings of Hungarian culinary specialties and wines to prepare you for your dining experiences during your vacation. This is the perfect introduction to all the Hungarian specialties that Budapest offers in abundance and some fun for those who like to spend time in the kitchen.

The gay and lesbian community in Budapest is well established with over twenty bars, clubs, restaurants, cafes, shops and accommodations. The official tourism website of Budapest has a section dedicated to the GLBT community and updates the information on a regular basis. One of the most popular bars with locals and tourists is the Action Bar and it is a great place to start your evening or night on the town especially if you enjoy some male dancers as part of your entertainment. It is a little hard to locate but once you are there you will find helpful and friendly staff, who will assist you with local information. Late night parties at the Alterego Bar and Lounge are popular with locals and tourists and the partying continues well into the night on weekends.

When searching for accommodations in Budapest the gay choices are limited and found mostly in Pest. Guest Residences by K.M. Saga offer eight rooms and suites with period decorations in a Nineteenth Century Art Nouveau Building with modern amenities. Connection Guesthouse offers seven rooms in a great central location and the facilities include free Internet, lounge and bar plus helpful staff who can help you discover the gay scene. There are also several new boutique hotels in Budapest who pride themselves on being gay-friendly. The Lanchid 19 Hotel is located close to the Chain Bridge and offers forty-eight beautifully designed rooms and suites at affordable rates, many of which have beautiful views of the city and Danube. Wherever you stay in Budapest, you will certainly find a perfect combination of historical architecture and modern conveniences.

In the twenty years since the end of communist domination of Hungary, Budapest has emerged as a modern city with an historic past and has earned the reputation as the Gay Capital of Central Europe. With the advent of discount airlines in Europe it has become a popular weekend get-away for gay travelers throughout Europe and during the summer months it is becoming a trendy new gay destination for visitors from around the world.

This summer you might want to consider a visit to the Queen of the Danube and enjoy the gay-friendly welcome which awaits you in Budapest. ▼

Roy Heale has been the owner of SuperMarketing for the past twenty-five years and is the founder and publisher of Outlooks magazine. He is also a member of the Travel Media Association of Canada.

Photos by Roy Heale, and courtesy of the Tourism Office of Budapest.

Gellert Spa

Vajdahunyad Castle

Castle Grounds

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Funicular

Heroes' Square

MP Mario Silva and His Holiness the Dali Lama

Out and Running

By Dale Smith

Liberal MP Mario Silva has been in Parliament since 2004, and came out publicly shortly thereafter. With a federal election certain to happen at any moment now, *Outlooks* sat down with Mr. Silva to talk about what it's like running as an out politician in today's political scene.

Silva began his political career in 1994, running for city council in Toronto. He served there three terms—nine years—which saw him filling many positions including chairing the Economic Development committee and serving as acting mayor.

"In 1994, it doesn't seem like that long ago, but it was still a bit difficult in terms of coming out as a gay politician," Silva says. Not that it stopped him from getting involved in advocacy or AIDS awareness, or supporting Pride or the flag raising.

"It was quite an amazing transformation—these things seemed so difficult in 1994, and when I left in 2003 it seemed so easy," Silva says. "It was an incredible change in attitude. Barbra Hall was mayor at the time I got elected. She was the first mayor to declare Pride Day in Toronto—quite a milestone. It seems like all the achievements that the community made over the years, from same-sex marriages to all the definitions and health benefits and everything else, it seems like we've always had these forever, but the reality is that there were quite a lot of battles that were fought, and from fourteen years ago when I started my political career until now, it's been a huge transformation."

"The Toronto of 1994 is not the same as the Toronto of 2007, and the issue is no longer an issue, which is good," Silva continues. "I think we want to see a situation where being gay and being a politician is no longer an issue, it's just who you are, you're doing a service to your country and your people. In 1994, people paid attention, are you out, not out, are you gay, not gay or whatever, and it's just quite remarkable how the country and certainly my city has fundamentally changed. Nobody cares, and I'm happy see that it's evolved to a situation like that because I think that's where the community wants to be, where we just want to be treated like everybody else, like normal, and we weren't special or segregated or pointed out or labelled, but it's being who you want to be."

When the opportunity arose to move into federal politics, Silva took it. Despite the good work he did with the city, and the learning experience it provided as every issue affected people more directly, Silva says his heart has always been at the federal level.

"I've always wanted to deal with issues of both the country as a nation, and Canada and the world," he says. "There's no other forum in the world and no other forum in the country than Parliament to deal with the concerns of national and international scope."

In the past two elections, the question of same-sex marriage was an issue that affected Silva on the campaign trail. "First of all, for my nomination it was an issue," he says. "When I ran, the two Liberals I ran against were running for only one reason and that was to stop same-sex marriage, and they teamed up together, and [they] were trying to stop me because they knew I was going to vote for same-sex marriage. It didn't work, and people just got tired. I think that people voted because they knew—at least for my nomination—of my work with the city, they knew my work in the community, I grew up in the neighbourhood, I was the local boy."

Once he started knocking on doors, it was an issue for his constituents as well. "There were people who were quite upset asking 'why are you voting for this, why are you supporting this, why is the Liberal party doing this?' and I would say to them 'If that's your only issue, then don't vote for me—vote for somebody else.'" Silva pauses. "And you know they would stop and say 'well, that's not my only issue' and they would go on to other things. That's why I have little sympathy for those who say 'well I was voting according to my constituents, to the area that I represent.' My area is predominantly ethnic, it's predominantly Catholic, and I had pretty much every church opposing same-sex marriage. And yet my vote in 2006 was higher than my vote in 2004—in fact it went up by twenty-five per-cent, so this whole thing that it was a big factor is that it just wasn't."

"I think that at the end of the day, [voters] just care more about the other issues," Silva says. "I don't think it was a ballot issue—yes, people had strong views about it but then they got over it. I think that people have really moved on, and I think the great thing about this country, unlike other countries, particularly the United States where abortion is still as hot of a topic today as it first was with Roe vs. Wade decision, in Canada we may not all agree on issues like same-sex marriage or abortion—we all have our own particular views—but overall we're a very accepting country and I think we understand that once something has come forward then we need to move on and let people have their own views."

That's not to say that every riding would have the same experience. As an urban candidate, Silva's riding of Toronto Davenport is a few streets and neighbourhoods. Evangelical groups trying to mobilise his riding didn't have enough of an impact as most of their members were from outside of the riding—something that may not be the case in a rural riding. "If they ever mobilise, where they can have a strong impact is organising people for the nominations to put in whatever candidate they want," Silva warns. "That can be a very powerful force. I think that overall if you become a single-issue candidate, then people just will not turn out."

One of the more obvious challenges in campaigning as an out MP is just what to put on your campaign literature. "I know one Member of Parliament who says that for every photo with two or three of his kids, it's an extra five percent," Silva says. "Some people I think like the idea of a 'family politician,' and to an extent I do keep my partner out of the spotlight because he's not interested in being at the forefront in that manner, he's got his own successful career and I think with some people there is a certain respect for privacy."

That can mean that mention of work in the gay and lesbian community can also be effaced in order to present a different image in campaign literature. "I think that happens," Silva admits. "I'm also a member of the Portuguese community and there's a lot of work for that community that I just don't list, and the reason for that is because sometimes people will think that's all you care about is that community—all he cares about is gay issues, all he cares about is Portuguese issues." Incidentally, Silva is also the first Portuguese-Canadian MP.

"As much as I think that we live in a very tolerant and accepting country, and that we've moved on beyond same-sex marriage, I think there's still a perception that if you are an out politician that you can talk about your relationship but there's a privacy sort of issue—whether it's wrong or right I don't know, whether it's good or bad I don't know, but I think there probably is to an extent." Silva remains unsure if that qualifies as a double standard, however. "I think it's just the way it is."

"The reality of Canada is the traditional norm of a family no longer exists," Silva says. "People are living in many different in ways, in many different relationships. It's quite a different reality than twenty-five years ago. There is a group of people who would like to see their political leaders be picture-perfect with their family members, and I think that too will change over time with the new generation."▼

Dale Smith is a freelance writer in Ottawa. He is also a regular contributor to Capital Xtra and Ottawa Xpress, and an occasional contributor to the Hill Times.

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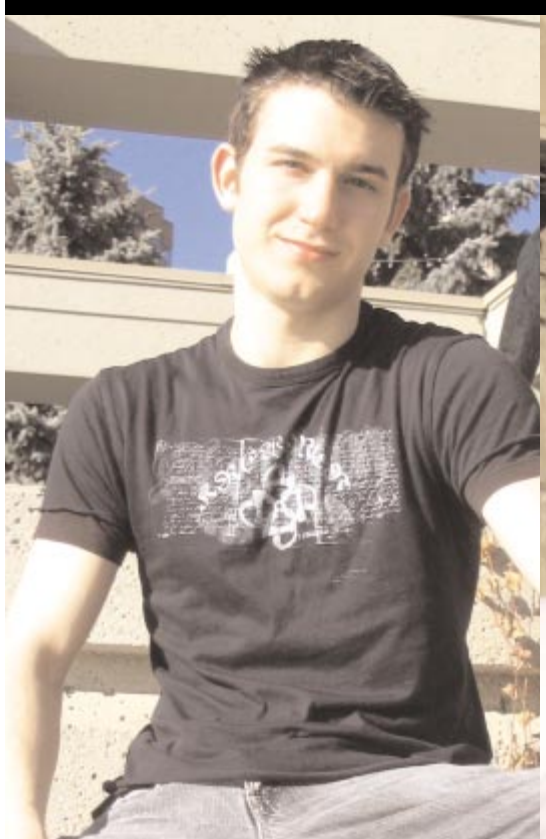

Daniel hails from Hay River, NWT and now calls Calgary home. He currently works at Twisted Element and enjoys video games, skiing and going to the mall with friends.
Photos by *Outlooks* staff

DANIEL

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The Greenroom with Charlie David

Co-Hosts Charlie David and Shannon McDonough

Shannon McDonough is funny. She induces laughter that will make you choke on your turkey burger and have diet coke coming out your nose. And she doesn't even try. As *Out TV's* lesbian travel guru on *Bump!* she comes across as someone you've known your entire life. Intelligent, inquisitive and always up for an adventure. Dragon Boat racing? Sure, why not!? Lap dance from a lesbian burlesque dancer? Bring on the whole troupe!!

Shannon and I co-host *Bump!* and after three seasons of globe-trotting you'd think we might have spent some quality time together. A production meeting, a night on the town, heck, even a cup of coffee! The truth is since we're always traveling to different locations, we've never actually met face to face! Until today—it's high time! We host a travel series don't we? I hopped on a plane from Los Angeles to meet Shannon in Toronto for lunch…

Outlooks: Between you and me, why the heck is the show called *Bump?!?* I promise, seriously, not to tell anyone if you let me in on the secret... Well maybe only *Outlooks* readers.

McDonough: Between you, me and the lamppost, I have no idea why it's called *Bump*! Way back in 2001 when I first got the part, they were still throwing some names around and one of them was "orbit" or something like that. Where BUMP came from is beyond me. Had they asked me, it would have been called 'The Shannon McDonough Show with Special Guest Appearances by some Cute Topless Boys.'

Outlooks: So you get to travel on a personal mission to scout out the hottest lesbians in the world... How did you get involved in this dream job?

McDonough: When I heard there was going to be a Canadian gay & lesbian TV network I got very excited. I saw an audition notice to host a gay travel show. You needed to be fun, outgoing, gay, and have a valid passport. I had actually forgotten to make the tape and on the last day I came home from work at about midnight and my girlfriend made me make a tape right then and there. I pretended the tape was my video submission to be on *Survivor*! I guess that got their attention because I was called in for an audition. I think I had three rounds of auditions. They sent my agent a script about Toronto that I had to memorize. When I got in to the audition and the camera was in my face, I totally panicked. I was sweating and stumbling over my lines... Oh I was just terrible! When it was over I went to the bar across the street, ordered two beers, called my girlfriend in tears and told her to come and get me... I had ruined my chances! I called my agent and asked him to call them and ask for a second chance if they had the time. About a week later, I got a call for another audition, and this time I had to walk down Church Street with a camera crew and interview strangers off the cuff. I was determined not to screw it up! Of course everyone I stopped turned out to be a weirdo, or straight, or thought they were from another planet. I think the producers liked the fact that I managed to plow right on through regardless of how strange my interview subjects were. That, or they felt sorry for me. At any rate—the job was mine!

Outlooks: Where does every lesbian have to visit before they die? And why?

McDonough: It wasn't until I started working on *Bump*! that I put much thought into what a gay friendly destination means. Now after doing so much travel on the show and on my own, I know that it is really important to find places where we will be welcomed and safe. I have a gorgeous six-foot tall glamazon for a girlfriend and when we travel, she gets a lot of attention. I want to know that if some creeps start giving her a hard time, we will be safe and the laws will protect us. That's why I think it's amazing to go on lesbian vacations. It doesn't have to be every time you travel...but every lesbian needs to experience a women-specific vacation at least once. The guys have them all the time, they have gay cruises and circuit parties and the like. Many women don't even realize that there are lesbian parties like this too. I have been to Womenfest in Key West Florida; The Dinah Shore Weekend in Palm Springs, California; Michigan Women's Festival in Michigan; and I am involved in the new lesbian week in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico called Vallarta Heat. When you get off the plane you can feel the estrogen! It's a mighty powerful feeling.

Outlooks: You're about to have a very busy spring. Where will your *Bump!* travels be taking you?

McDonough: I am about to leave for Australia for February and March. We are doing two episodes on Sydney, then Tasmania and Cairns. In April I go to Spain and then it's Eastern Europe! All of this is super exciting because I haven't been to any of these locations before. The flight to Australia is going to be looooong… but Quantas Airlines is flying us first class, so I'm going to have one of those cocoons. I bet we could shoot a whole show on the plane. I also have a bit of a spider phobia, and I hear that they have monster spiders in Australia. I have a friend who lived in Australia and saw something out of the corner of his eye. He thought it was a cat but it turned out to be a huntsman spider. EEEEEEEEEKKKK! I already have it in my contract—no spiders!

Outlooks: *Bump*! is airing its third season on *Out TV* in Canada, can you believe it!? And now with the DVDs rolling out and available everywhere from Amazon.com to Netflix to every little gay store in the village—are you getting recognized all the time? Do people stop you for travel tips?

McDonough: To be honest, I have been recognized a lot more in the last year, since the relaunching of *Out TV* and all of the press about season three and the DVDs. I do get people who ask where my favorite places have been, and where I suggest they go, but I don't get recognized too much. I'm not a soap opera star like you, Mr. Fancy Pants.

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Outlooks: What's your worst travel experience? Your best?

McDonough: The worst travel experience I had wasn't on *Bump*! My girlfriend and I both work on an *HGTV* show called *Disaster DIY*. This past season was long and stressful so we needed a break. We found a cheap, all-inclusive deal to Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic and booked it...in August! Do you remember the *Ab Fab* episode where they went to Morocco and Patsy and Edie fainted as soon as they got out of the airport? Well picture that, but not as funny. There weren't many people in our hotel and since it was the low season, they were doing construction—nice. We hadn't done our homework, there was nothing gay friendly about the resort or Puerto Plata. I think that the whole women's equality thing skipped over the town we were staying in because we were hooted and hollered at, we were grabbed and pulled by men. It just goes to show, make sure you do your research and find a place that you know you will feel comfortable.

My best experience was in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. I met the lesbian mayor of PV and she took us on a wild tour of the city. We had a great time and have been back three times since then. It is a gorgeous old fishing village filled with charm and it is so super gay friendly! I wasn't expecting to be so welcomed there, but it's like the people of Puerto Vallarta pick you up in a big hug as soon as you arrive, and you don't want to let go. I love, love, love it there, and that's another reason that I'm doing the women's week—Vallarta Heat.

Outlooks: Where in the world haven't you been but you're dying to go?

McDonough: I am very excited about Eastern Europe. Years ago I saw photographs of Prague and the architecture and beauty of it really captured my imagination. I have always wanted to go, and I can hardly wait because we'll shoot a new *Bump*! episode there in May! As you know, we don't get much time off when we are shooting, but I'm really hoping to sneak some sightseeing time to myself.

Outlooks: What advice would you give to new travelers?

McDonough: Always, always do your research. Get on the Internet and find out what's happening in town. Find out what areas of the city are safe and what areas you should avoid. Most cities have a gay website and they will tell you all about what's going on. I know that our website, **bumptv.com** has a ton of info as well. *Bump!* also has mobisodes and video podcasts that can be downloaded to your Blackberry or cell phone and it will tell you all about the gay hot spots in whatever town you are visiting.

Shannon

The most important thing is to know that you don't have to be closeted or frightened when you go on a vacation. I personally won't go on vacation to a country where homosexuality is still illegal, and I don't think any queer should. You can find tons of destinations that will be friendly, do your research and don't settle for less.

Outlooks: Do you have other projects you're working on?

McDonough: I am writing a movie, and a lesbian comedy/drama. I hope to be shopping them around in a few months. I am working as a producer on a home renovation show on *HGTV*, and I am involved in Vallarta Heat, women's week in Puerto Vallarta. No wonder I am so busy!

Outlooks: Okay, seriously, the most important question—when are we going on a trip together?!? We need to tag team an episode!

McDonough: I couldn't agree more! We have been waiting for two years to do an episode together. It would be a great way to show how gays and lesbians can vacation together. Trying to balance between what the girls and the boys are looking for when they travel. *Bump*! hasn't done Hawaii yet. I've never been there before. That would be perfect. You shoot *Dante's Cove* there don't you? Well what a coincidence. I tell you what, I'll make this *Bump*! thing happen and while we are there, you get me on *Dante's Cove* too!

Outlooks: Ahh!! I love it! That's the producer in you, always up for a sweet negotiation, but sister—I like the way you think!

For more information on Shannon McDonough and her travel series, *Bump!* visit **bumptv.com, bumpdvd.com, outtv.ca**. ▼

Charlie David is an actor and co-host of Bump! on OUTtv.

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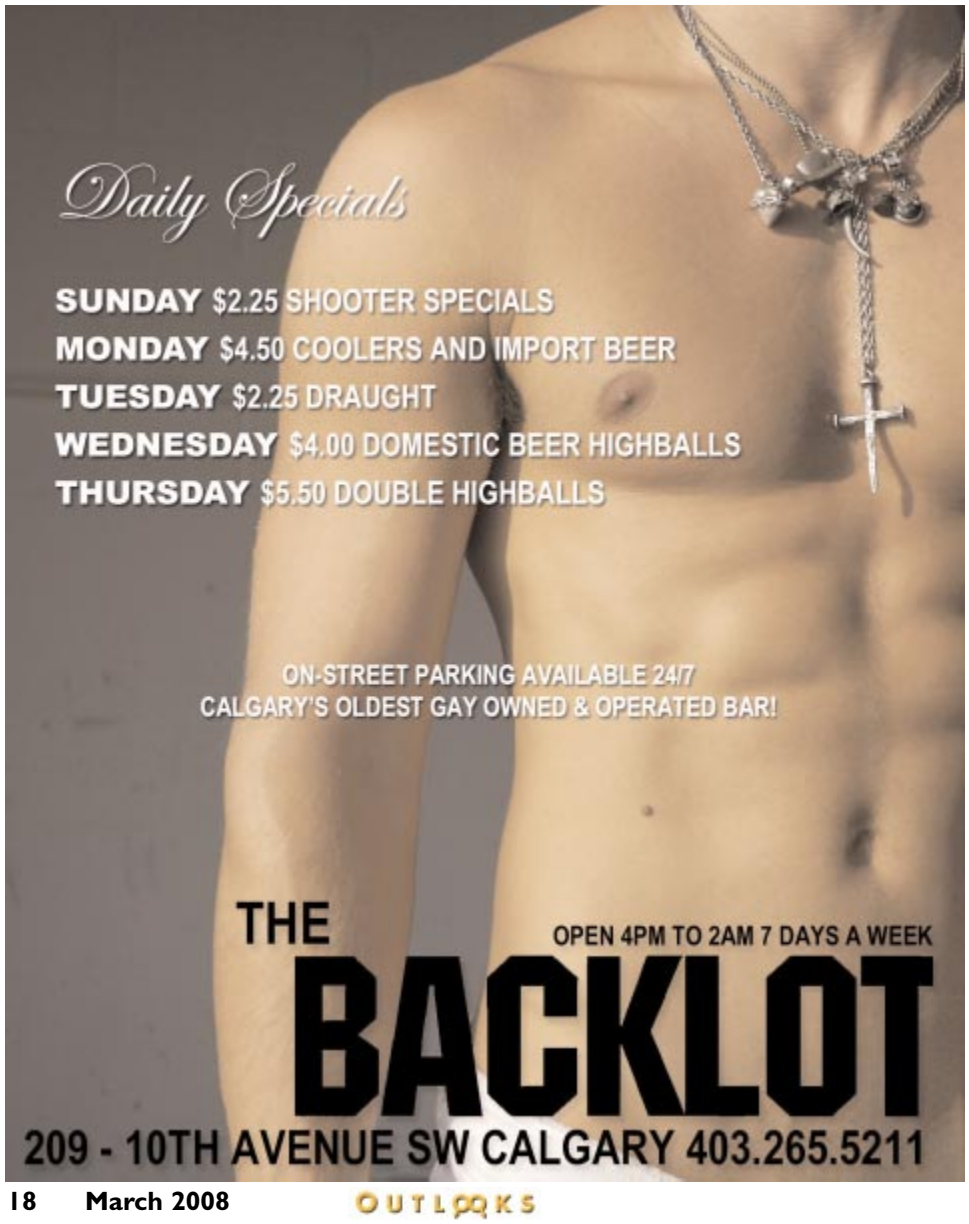
Investing In Your Future

By Roy Heale

Resort property ownership in warm climates is becoming increasingly popular amongst the GLBT community and Costa Rica is becoming a destination in Central America that the gay population finds very appealing. Costa Rica occupies a land mass of around 20,000 square miles in the southern part of Central America, including several small islands mostly on the Pacific side. It is much like the Province of Nova Scotia—only smaller—with two long coastlines. The country is only about 200 miles long and seventy miles wide at the narrowest part. It can be compared to British Columbia because of its mountain ranges, lush rain forests and diverse ecology. The three mountain ranges create five stunning and geographically diverse areas. These are the Northern Central Plains, the Northwest Peninsula, the Tropical Lowlands on the Pacific and Caribbean coasts and the Central Valley where seventy percent of the population resides.

In last month's travel story we explained that the locals, known as Ticos, are very gay-friendly. Costa Rica is becoming a popular destination for gay tourists from Europe, North America and South America. This also makes it a very attractive place to consider investing in a retirement home, a vacation property or simply an investment property to generate rental income. The cost of living here is considerably lower than in most countries and, having one of the most stable governments and economies in Latin America, it has attracted investors and developers from around the world. This has also created an established trend of property value appreciation and the future holds promise of a continued upward trend in real estate prices.

According to Ryan Ward of Green Seal Realty, this is the perfect time to look at a resort property while the Canadian dollar is enjoying strength against the U.S. dollar. "When it comes to the Canadian market, the number of flights to Costa Rice and the frequency to Liberia Airport have increase recently. We already have a large number of Canadians living at The Oaks," says Ryan Ward. The climate is right for foreign investment in Costa Rica and in fact the government rewards foreigners who invest more than US$50,000 with a status known as "inversionista" or large investor. This allows the investor to remain in the country for up to six months at a time versus the normal tourist visa of three months. This status also assists and accelerates the immigration process should you decide to take the Tico plunge and become a permanent resident and citizen.



Aranel Volcano Region

Any real estate investment in a foreign country comes with a certain amount of risk, and it is important to eliminate as much risk as possible going into your investment. Title insurance is one way to ensure that your new property is in fact yours to enjoy. One of the most important aspects of protecting a real estate investment is making sure the title to the property is in proper order. A title guaranty or title insurance policy protects your ownership and use of the property by guarding against unknown and hidden risks that may cause you loss or affect your ownership. In Costa Rica this insurance is available from Stewart Title Latin America, the same company that insures land in the U.S. from title fraud. The fact that Stewart Title operates in Costa Rica indicates the growth in foreign investment and that investment comes with only limited risk. The main reason to buy title insurance is that many North Americans and Europeans want their property insured and their investment protected. Make sure whatever you are considering as your investment qualifies for this type of insurance.

With the absence of hurricanes, typhoons, or wild fires, your risk of natural disasters is minimal to both property and personal effects. Costa Rica enjoys a very temperate climate and year-round the average temperature is close to seventy degrees Fahrenheit with a rainy season from September to late November. This allows you to enjoy your vacation or retirement home all year round and not just during the Canadian winter months.

All beaches on both coasts are public domain and no resorts have private beaches. Many have ocean views and are priced appropriately. There can be substantial savings by purchasing your new home just a short distance from the beach. "At The Oaks, phase one is already completed and phase two is already underway for November 2008 completion. This allows a potential purchaser to really see what their resort property will be like. But we are still priced competitively with other pre-construction projects, and we are only ten minutes to the beach," says Ward. "Our early purchasers have already experienced a five to ten percent appreciation in their property values, and we expect this trend will continue," says Ward.

Currently, demand for vacation properties in Costa Rica is generally greater than the pace of construction and it is considered to be a seller's market. Pre-construction purchases are an attractive proposition and usually allow up to one year before you would take possession of your new home. This also indicates that your investment will appreciate in value fairly quickly or there will be plenty of opportunity to rent out your home when you are not using it. The most lengthy and perhaps enjoyable task will be traveling around the country trying to decide where you would like to settle and spend your future leisure time.

Manuel Antonio Hillside

Foreigners enjoy the same rights as Costa Ricans when purchasing land and properties. This means that you can own the property outright in your own name or in the name of a corporation formed by a local lawyer. The only advantage to the corporation is beneficial tax laws on any rental income or in the case of joint ownership and future sale of the property. Property taxes are very low in Costa Rica at one quarter of one per cent. For example, annual taxes for a $200,000 home would be only five hundred dollars. Also, most condominium fees are lower than those in Canada. When you are searching for your home it is best to have your financing arranged before you leave Canada, where interest rates are likely to be more favorable. However, it is possible to arrange local mortgages if your credit rating is satisfactory. Usually, after making an offer on a property the closing is within thirty to sixty days and the full purchase price is required at that time.

Calgarian Kelly Ernst, President of Strategic Intelligence Alliance, recently purchased a home in Costa Rica in Manuel Antonio, which is one of the most heavily gay-populated resort regions in the country. Ernst decided on Costa Rica after travelling to many different countries with a view to purchasing a vacation home. "We liked the gay-friendly people, we loved the natural unspoiled environment, the stunning beauty and, of course, the fact that real estate prices are still reasonable," says Ernst. The purchase process proved to be very easy and similar to buying a home in Canada. "We spent about two weeks looking for the home and then about another month completing the purchase and all the move-in details"

Ernst pointed out that in Costa Rica the culture is very different, the business environment moves at a different pace and the language is different to what we are used to in Canada. Therefore you need to be careful about your research, do your homework, and investigate the property and neighbourhood before you buy. "Don't rush-in, take your time, which will result in a better deal and long-term happiness with your purchase," says Ernst. Most importantly he appreciated the gay-friendly environment in Costa Rica.

This is a country of unequalled beauty, with a warm welcome for gay investors, a high standard of living and a great concern for the preservation of the natural environment. It is well known for the importance it places on peace, education and democracy earning it the reputation as the "Switzerland of Central America". In 1949 the government abolished the army and allocated all would be military expenses to education and health care, thus ensuring the future social wealth for all citizens. While the roads and some of the infrastructure are somewhat primitive, the natural charms of this tropical paradise remain untouched and unspoiled.

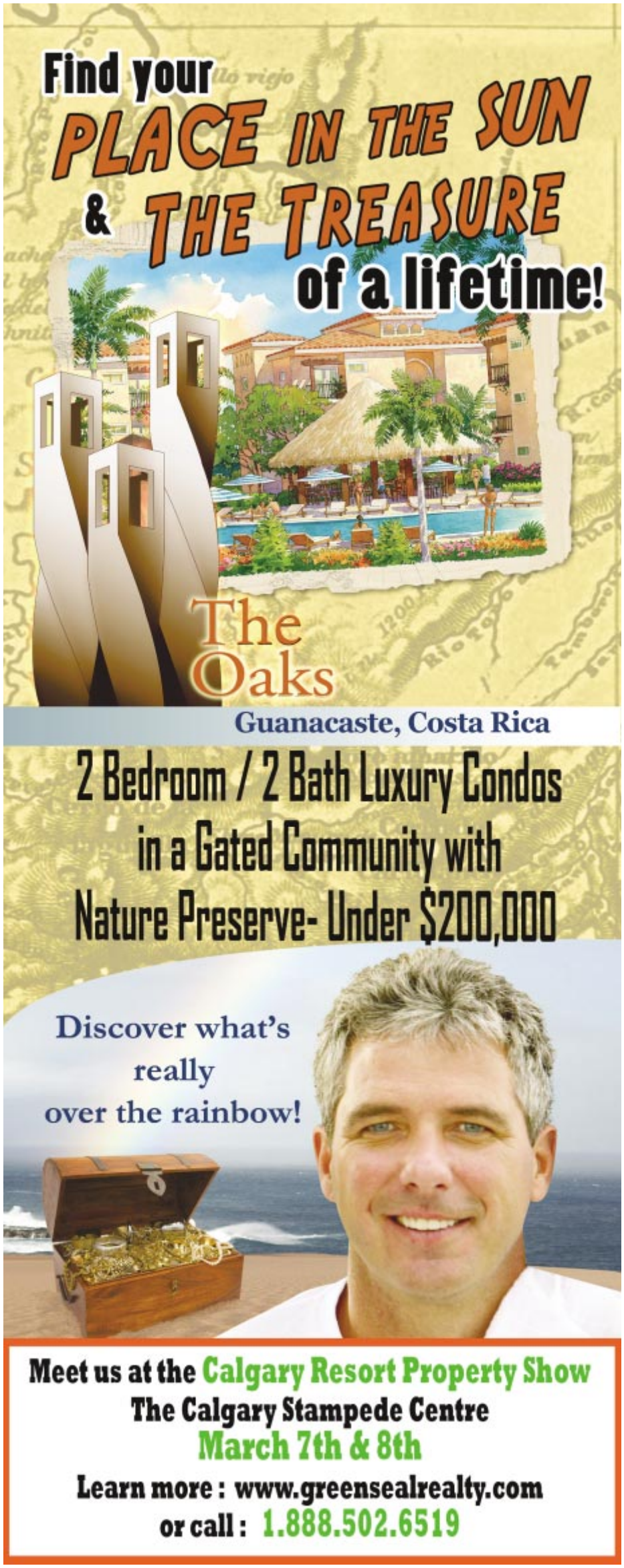
The gay community is well established in the capital city of San Jose, the coastal resort at Manuel Antonio National Park, and in several other towns throughout the countryside. It is definitely a place that is attracting attention from the gay traveller and future growth of gay businesses is almost guaranteed.

All of these factors combined explain the booming real estate market and why Costa Rica is one of the new gay choices for investment and possible future retirement plans. Visit for a holiday and you will understand the magic of this tropical paradise and why the Ticos are such a happy people. ▼

For more information, visit **greensealrealty.com**

Roy Heale has been the owner of SuperMarketing for the past twenty-five years and is the founder and publisher of Outlooks magazine. He is also a member of the Travel Media Association of Canada.

The Oaks of Guanacaste



Ruling the Runway

by Josh Murray

Producers clearly don't long to see "quiet decorum" listed among the interests of potential cast members for reality shows—so *Project Runway Canada* executives must have been thrilled to come across Evan Biddell. "I know why I watch reality TV and it's not to see everybody get along," he says. The Vancouver-based designer, who—like his fashion line—goes by just the moniker "Biddell", ruffled more than a few feathers, swore like a sailor and ultimately ran off with the top prize on Canada's premiere season of the popular series. "I did what I had to do to make a TV show worth watching—and I won in the end so, obviously, it worked," he says.

His confidence has certainly not suffered in the few months since supermodel-host Iman labelled him a "visionary" but Biddell also has not let the accolades affect his determination. "The judges knew there was a lot more to come. I do to," he admits. "I'm glad now that I have the platform to scream it at the top of my lungs."

Prior to the competition, the twenty-four-year-old toiled as a boutique owner, working on custom fashion pieces for clients in Victoria and Fernie, British Columbia. A fan of the U.S. version of *Runway*, he auditioned for the show for one simple reason. "I knew I could win," he says, plainly. "I knew it would be perfect for me. I work well under pressure—extremely well. It's more fun when it's do or die." Perhaps because of the well-documented mayhem of the show, Biddell was surprised by the number of other aspiring fashionistas that also turned out. "They really did find the twelve best designers they could," he admits. "We all went in expecting there to be a lot less talent than there ended up being in Canada." Just as the audience for the Heidi Klum-hosted American version of *Project Runway* eclipses its Canadian counterpart in total viewers, designers in Canada face an added challenge as players in a much smaller industry north of the 49th parallel. "If we were Americans, designers at our level would be working and making $100,000 a year," Biddell explains. "But in Canada, there's not as much opportunity—or industry—so we have to do *Project Runway* to get exposure."

And it is precisely that face time, the designer says, that presents the show's greatest opportunity. "Random people that are completely not into fashion, watched the show and became obsessed with it. It opens the door to fashion for the general public. It lets people into our world," he explains.

With so many eyes watching his every move over the highly-rated season, Biddell has been smart enough to capitalize—and with a heart. In December's finale, his "Addicted to Biddell" t-shirt had fashion fans chatting online and the idea has now morphed into actual commerce. "I got a great response from people wanting them," he says. The shirt, made of organic cotton, will be available for purchase in a variety of sizes at **addictedtobiddell.com**. A hefty portion of the profit from each sale will benefit Keep a Child Alive, the respected charity battling the AIDS pandemic in Africa with help from celebrity supporters like Alicia Keys and Runway's own Iman.

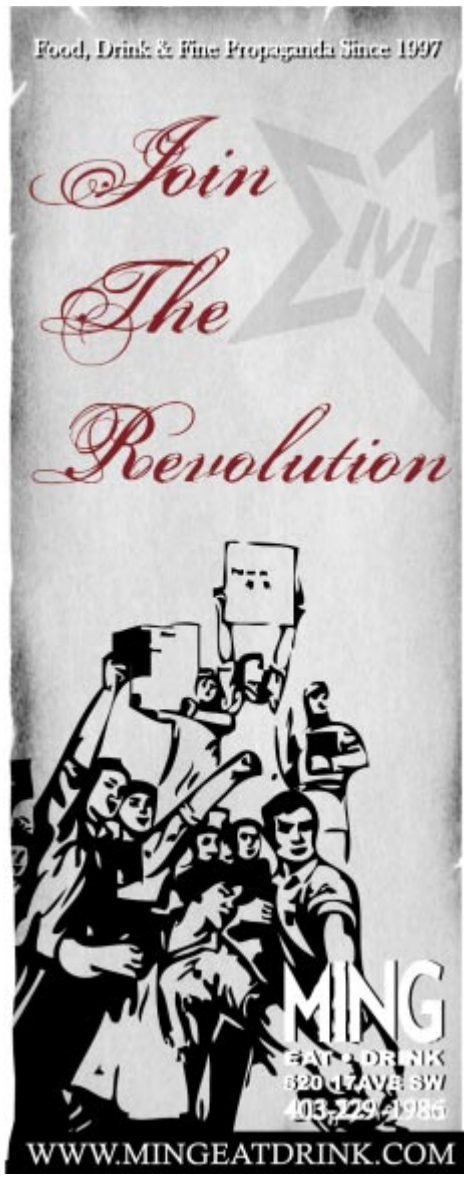
The earth-friendly fabric selected for the shirts is in no way a fluke. Biddell's western Canadian upbringing has profoundly affected his vision as a designer and as a citizen. "It's the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the cars we drive," he explains. "If I'm in fashion, this is what I feel I need to be doing—picking my fabrics wisely." The designer's work is clearly defined by this awareness and responsibility—utilizing fabrics like bamboo, organic cotton and silk. "Eco-lux…luxurious eco-friendly fabrics," he explains. "The technology is there now. It's just as beautiful as conventional fabrics but it's more eco-friendly. I want to be able to clean up after myself and be accountable for everything I put out."

Though it has environmentally-conscious consumers pleased, it may still take a while to convince more cynical leaders in his sometimes-fickle industry. "I've got an opportunity to scream out our West Coast ideas back east because they are okay with the way things are—and we're trying to progress here. We're trying to sustain," he says.

This heightened level of awareness might just be the key to help Biddell—and other Canadian designers—create a more profound impact on fashion's world stage. "Hopefully, we can build more of a solid identity behind Canadian fashion. Hopefully, we can grow," he says. "American fashion has its identity [but] we don't have much of an image—other than hoodies and jeans. Let's broaden that!"

His next opportunity to educate and entertain comes this month at Toronto's Fashion Week, where Biddell will show his environmentally-responsible designs as part of his Fall/Winter '08 collection before the country's toughest critics. "I really need this show. I need to hit this one out of the park to feel complete," Biddell admits. His optimism is evident—but so is his challenge moving forward with the inescapable stress of being the series champ. "There's definitely pressure. I'm not just in it with those twelve anymore. I'm in it with the rest of the world," he surmises. "I've had an introduction and now it's up to me to follow through." ▼

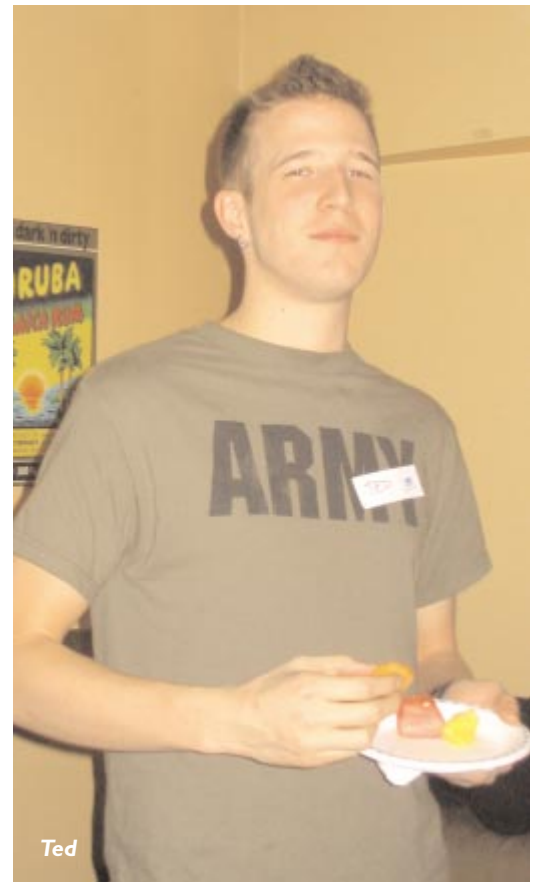
Josh Murray is a New York-based writer and the author of American Idol: The Journey to Stardom. For more information, visit joshmurray.ca.



James and Dean

Kim and Marnie

Calgary Networking Club
February 7, 2008
Money Pennies



Ted

"Hedwig"

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Hedwig and the Angry Inch
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Kelly

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Putting Community Development in the Pink

By Peter Carlyle-Gordge

Fostering community pride in the GLBT world has always been a challenge, with funding in short supply and volunteers struggling to make ends meet.

That applies with promoting youth programs, summer camps, GLBT choirs, programs that help people living with HIV, general education programs as well as sporting and social groups.

Evanson Volunteers

When the GLBT community first began organizing in Winnipeg it relied heavily on fund-raising socials. Its Rainbow Resource Centre has long struggled to stay afloat financially despite pleas for core funding from governments.

But the message has finally been heard and the resource centre has recently seen a doubling of its budget, allowing it to add staff and offer better-funded programs for youth as well as antihomophobia education and general counselling for those with problems. It's also been able to expand its working space.

The provincial government recently earmarked $275,000 to help the centre with GLBT community support, education and counselling programs. It's getting $180,000 over eighteen months for Healthy Child programs as well as another $90,000 for other initiatives including work on youth and safe sex programs.

But what about other GLBT community groups that are always in need of funds?

Volunteers are addressing that with the formation of Rainbow Community Development Inc, a.k.a. Pink Money Events. Its president is longtime GLBT activist Chris Vogel and he says the idea is simple: the group organizes fundraising events and all proceeds excluding overheads are dished out to deserving GLBT non-profit groups.

Anyone can join the group but membership has one catch: you have to come up with ideas for fundraisers and help plan and execute them.

Says Vogel: "We are all volunteers, we give all profits to community GLBT organizations and we try to focus on events which are different and which don't conflict with existing events such as those run by bars."

He says the new group is focused on doing rather than talking and holding endless meetings. Anyone with an idea to help a worthy cause can bring it forward and volunteers will help execute it. "We want ideas but also a commitment to work on making it happen," says Vogel.

One proposal being considered is holding a GLBT arts and crafts fair, a kind of bazaar just before Christmas. Definitely planned is a spring supper for March 29 which will be coupled with a performance by the Rainbow Harmony Project, the local GLBT choir which will be hosting the 2010 Canadian Unison Festival, when GLBT choirs from across Canada perform in Winnipeg.

A fall supper has been held for several years and has been profitable but the spring supper will help fund the choir's events, including a move to bring gay choir music to smaller towns around Manitoba. They need money for travel expenses and Vogel says he can think of no better a way to overcome latent rural homophobia than presenting the talented singing of real gay and lesbian human beings.

"It's a great educational tool and there is no lack of great talent," he says.

Also planned is a Dyke Night Up, a classy social buffet whose proceeds will support Gio's Cares, which provides gift packs for those living with AIDS. Another beneficiary of the event is the Fort Garry Women's Centre, which has run various lesbian programs.

Most events have some kind of rainbow auction of donated prizes with ticket sales raising much of the profit. The Dyke Night Up for instance will include one prize of an autographed first edition of *Contract With The World* by the late feminist writer Jane Rule, along with other donated goodies.

On June 7, Pink Money will also organize a loft party called Cocktails In The Trees, with a theme of Asian nights. It includes smart cocktails, sharp food and live entertainment. Tickets for the dressed up occasion are $30, with all profits going to support Winnipeg's Pride Committee as well as Gio's Cares.

Pink Money Events also organized its own Academy Awards on February 24, with prizes for the best Hollywood costumes, along with fancy hors d'oeuvres and desserts. All money raised will support GLBT youth programs and Gio's Cares.

And last New Year's Eve they held a $50-a-ticket fancy New Year's champagne reception in the greenly exotic conservatory at Assiniboine Park.

Says Vogel: "We actually didn't make a profit this first year, but everyone had a great time and we know the interest is there, so next year it will be on the social calendar. We have already booked the conservatory space and it will become a fundraiser."

Vogel, a retired civil servant and long a gay activist in Manitoba, says there are plenty of worthy GLBT organizations around, including sports and youth groups, but most of them lack basic funds to keep programs running. He says Pink Money will be there to help them stay in business, whether they cater to gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and two spirited, or the transgendered.

"The Rainbow Resource Centre is entirely separate from us and is now less desperate for money so we can focus on smaller groups that badly need a helping hand," he adds. "We welcome anyone with ideas and the energy to help make things happen. They can work on a single event or many, but the operative word is doing, not talking." ▼

Peter Carlyle-Gordge is a former Manitoba correspondent for Maclean's *and* The Financial Post. *He has written for most major magazines and newspapers in Canada as well as broadcasting on the national and international networks of CBC Radio. As honorary press secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba in the 1980s, Peter was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for services to Canada in 2003.*

Photo by Jay Richthammer

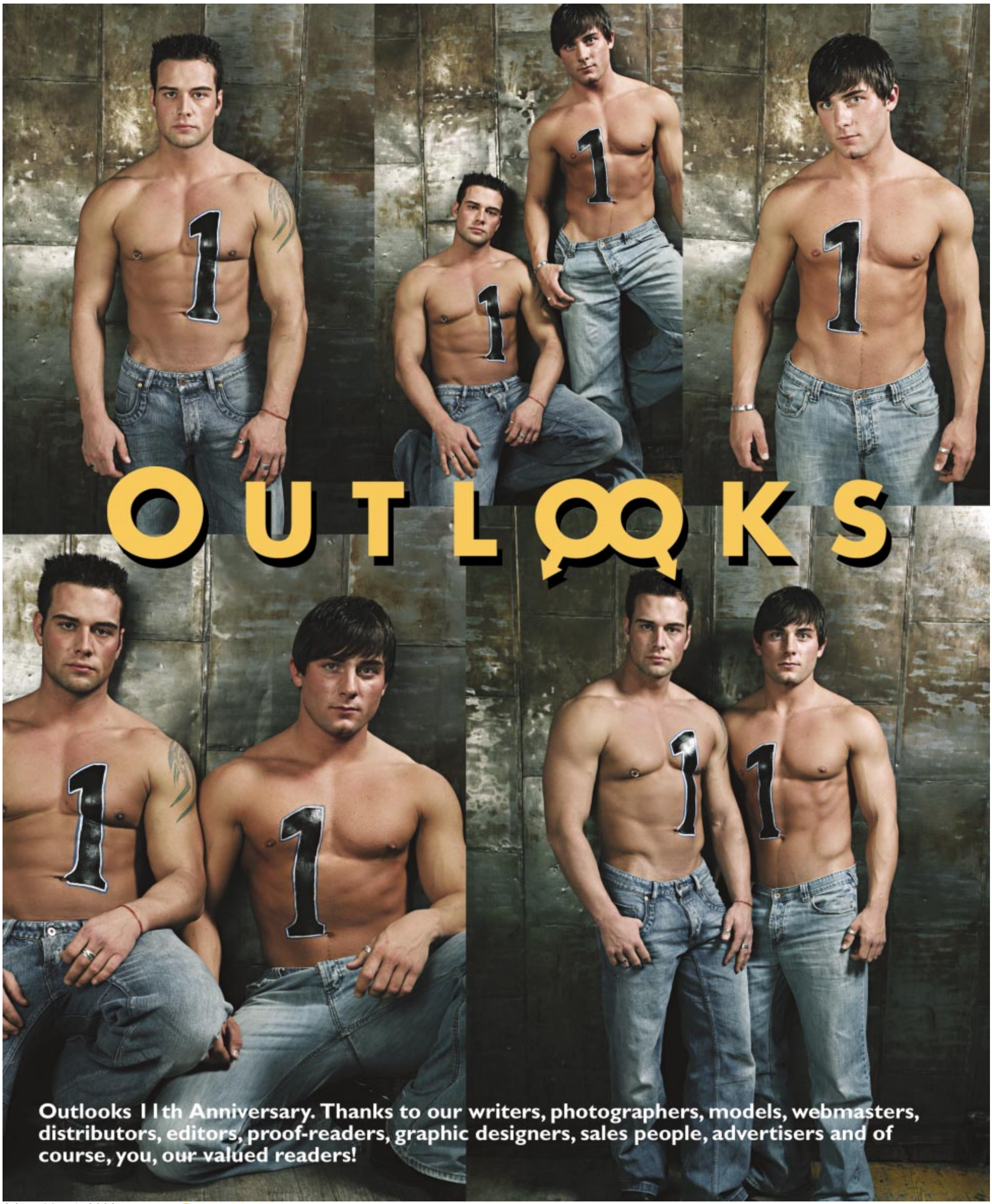
Focus

Kyle Marquardt

Kyle, based in Calgary, has been dedicated to photography since getting his first camera in High School. Alberta is the perfect setting given the stellar mountain views and wildlife the province has to offer. His work became a passport to new places when he became a photography guide, taking camera enthusiasts and photographers to the Arctic and Antarctic. His work is printed on a myriad of materials and media, from videos and slideshows to canvas gallery wraps.

For more information, visit **kylefoto.com**

Submit your work to Outlooks - periodically we feature a GLBT photographer or artists' work to showcase Canadian artistic talent. If you would like to be considered, please send samples of your work to main@outlooks.ca



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Calgary Cares 2008 - Sweet 70's

By Sean McLennan

The best party in town is back this month: Calgary Cares, AIDS Calgary's annual fundraiser. This year's event is entitled "Sweet 70's: All in Good Taste!", a theme to which AIDS Calgary's director Susan Cress has personally been looking forward.

Performers at Calgary Cares

She notes that our current generation of young adults all grew up with HIV/AIDS and all of AIDS Calgary's education comes from a post-HIV perspective. However, gay culture was exciting in the 70's—it was a time of awakening and empowerment. Disco brought with it a tolerance of diversity and an exhortation to explore sensuality of all kinds. It's no surprise that disco and gay culture came to be tightly linked. "Sweet 70's" will be a glimpse of what came before: a chance to reflect on where we came from and—for those of us who remember the '70s—to share the joy with the young'uns.

Those familiar with Calgary Cares will know what to expect—sort of. You'll recognize the format and the venue: the show, the silent auction, the cocktails and mingling before hand, the dancing after—all at the Jack Singer. Of course, those familiar with Calgary Cares will also know that every event is unique; the format may be largely consistent over the years, but what content gets pumped into that format is the important factor and year after year, AIDS Calgary has managed to keep pushing the envelope, giving us something new and exciting.

It's easy to say what happens at Calgary Cares; it's much harder to put the impact into words. Many Calgary Cares virgins will initially balk at the $150 price tag attached to the evening—but it's worth it. This is an event that garners national and international awards practically every year. There is an energy that arises as much from the attendees as anything else—it's social alchemy at its most sophisticated. Calgary Cares draws an incredibly diverse audience that you will see nowhere else. Gay, straight or otherwise, youth, seniors, doctors, servers, educators, executives, professionals and retail workers—a broad cross-section of the city's demographics come together with an attitude of acceptance and the intention to have a great time. I predict that the '70s theme will synergistically reinforce that atmosphere making this year one of the Calgary Cares' best.

Ginch Gonch Models

What makes Calgary Cares that much more impressive is knowing that it is a largely volunteer run event. There is a core executive committee of about ten people and then another one hundred and twenty or so volunteers including about eighty performers that are responsible for putting on the event. The fact is, these people are passionate about the cause and the work that AIDS Calgary does and that makes all the difference.

Sadly, HIV/AIDS is part of the daily lives of about 1200 Calgarians who know their HIV status—and an unknown number of people who don't. AIDS Calgary provides invaluable support to that population and comprehensive education geared at keeping it from growing further. In a city with a booming economy, the cost of providing those services only grows; everything costs more and there are more people to reach. Instead of recognizing the crucial function that organizations like AIDS Calgary serve within communities across Canada, the Harper government has recently cut funding to HIV/AIDS related organizations. According to Susan this has a direct impact on the number of counselors that are available to provide support; the number of educators in the schools, clubs, and chat rooms.

That means that Calgary Cares and the other fundraising initiatives that AIDS Calgary will be ramping up with this year are all that more important. They will be looking to raise $235,000 at Calgary Cares this year—an increase of about $50,000 over last year (a target that they were successful in meeting). Susan says that they've been having an easier time getting sponsorship this year; a fact that she says isn't just attributable to Calgary's economic boom. She believes that the success of the OutGames and OutRights last year has really raised the profile and reputation of AIDS Calgary within the city. Make no mistake, however, they still need more sponsorship! Along with the boom, come increased costs for the venue, more competition for the dates and with other fundraisers. The last thing they want to do is have to raise the ticket price, which would probably have a negative impact on the diversity of the audience.

The fundraising for "Sweet 70's" will be aligned specifically with the new Calgary Cares Centre which opened last fall as part of AIDS Calgary's move to its new location at 10th avenue and 16th street SW. The Calgary Cares Centre is an initiative focused on the human/community aspect of HIV/AIDS support and prevention. The goal was to create a physical space accessible to community groups and organizations of any sort—not just HIV/AIDS related—where people can connect with each other and maybe re-engage HIV/AIDS in a softer way. It is a response to a weakness AIDS Calgary identified in HIV/AIDS care that, these days, Sue Cress thinks emphasizes the professional and scientific. Clients will still get the same level of professional services they have in the past, but now, through the Calgary Cares Centre, they'll have access to other amenities. For example, there is a full kitchen which will now provide a hands on aspect to the nutritional programs, and clients without easy access to laundry facilities will be able to wash their clothes before, say going to a job interview or to meeting with a prospective landlord. (Actually, a washer and dryer is a missing piece the Centre is hoping to find through a generous donor in the community—if you have a lead on a washer and dryer get in contact with them!)

Susan notes that there is an additional side benefit to the Calgary Cares Centre—because it's a physical space she believes that it will make their work at AIDS Calgary more tangible to both the community and donors. That's part of the reason that they will be pairing Calgary Cares with the Calgary Cares Centre; the event will become a chance not only to raise money for the centre, but for AIDS Calgary to report on its successes and goals to the community that supports it.

"Sweet 70's" takes place on Saturday, March 29, 2008 at the EPCOR CENTRE'S Jack Singer Concert Hall. Doors open at 7 PM and the show starts at 9 PM. More information and tickets are available online at **calgarycares.ca**. ▼

Sean McLennan is a native Calgarian with (nearly) a PhD in Linguistics and Cognitive Science from Indiana University, where he was heavily involved in GLBT education. He currently has a full time gig in software for mobile technology.

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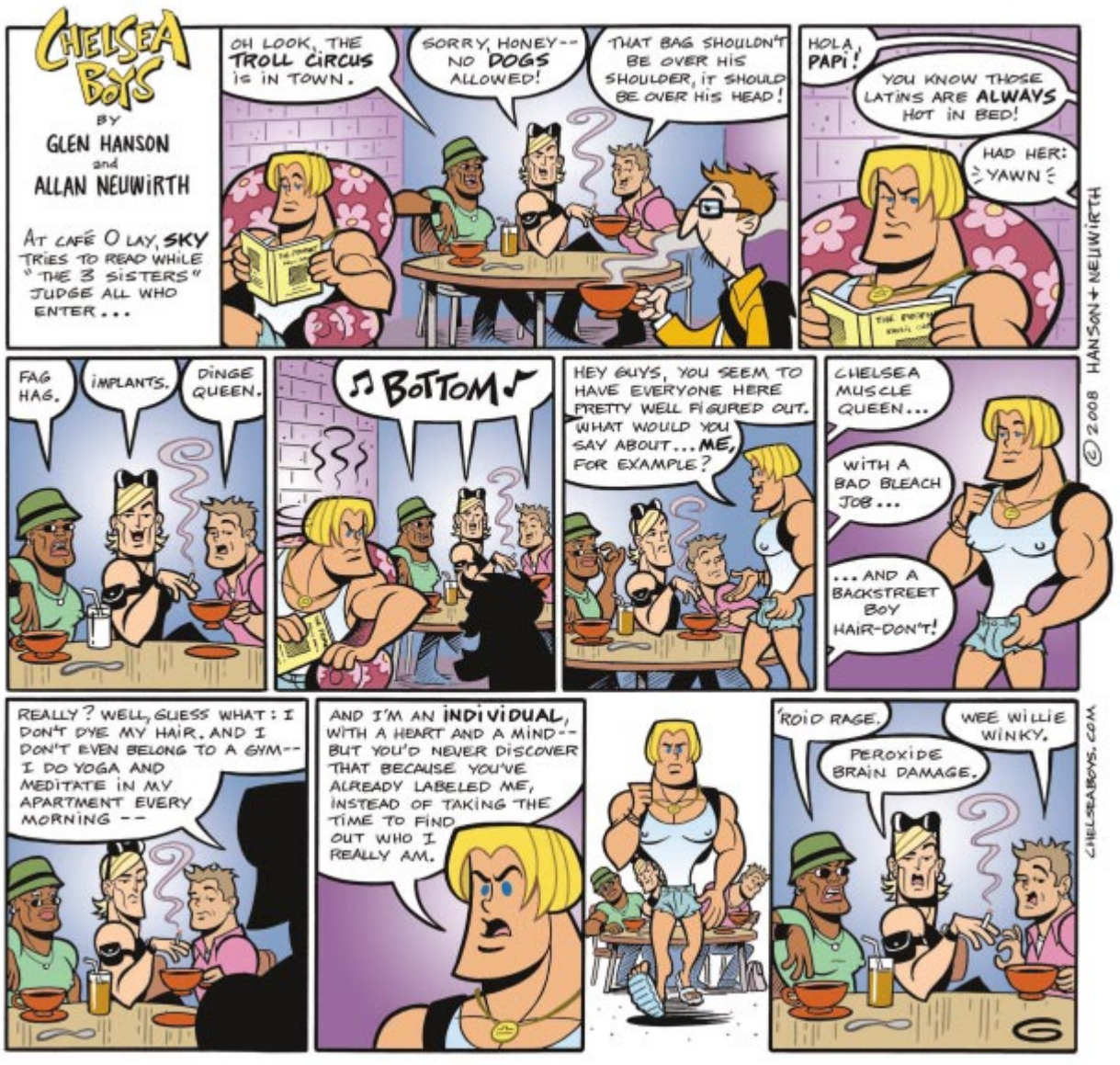

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A Teenager's Secret Shouldn't Be Deadly

By Doug Ross

A senseless tragedy occurred in Ajax, Ontario last October when a likeable, intelligent thirteen-year-old high-schooler named Shaquille Wisdom hanged himself because he was being harassed and bullied by his peers, simply because he was gay. Apparently, after Shaquille had confided his sexual preference to an acquaintance, he was outed. Shortly following that betrayal, the callous victimization began. He suffered abusive attacks…can you imagine the physical pain, not to mention the personal humiliation, of getting stuffed into a garbage can? He was publicly ostracized. And he was relentlessly tormented by homophobic insults and malicious threats via websites that other students used for targeting him.

Must today's gay teens endure such intense discrimination, defamatory "cyber-bullying" and unprovoked violence that it results in suicide? Or should today's gay teens be expected to live within a personal vacuum of shame, guilt, fear and despair instead? Neither! This degrading type of abuse and intolerance must be stopped immediately.

Adolescence can be a bitch! And today's teenagers don't have it easy whether they're homosexual or heterosexual, since the majority of them are grappling with similar dramatic changes revolving around such issues as heightened emotions, social uncertainty and awkwardness, an increased desire for success and acceptance within their school environment, possible self-esteem or inferiority concerns, additional family and/or job obligations, raging hormones and sexual experimentation. So as a result, the tremendous pressure to "fit in" probably seems daunting to a vast number of them. But especially to those who lack the coping skills required to confront any of those difficult issues.

And by adding other confusing situations into that already volatile mix, such as a reluctance to openly discuss same-sex romantic crushes, feelings of loneliness and alienation, negative perceptions from peers regarding the rich kid, the fat kid, the new kid or the gay kid, the frustrations surrounding their desperate need for acceptance might even appear overwhelming to some. But who could predict that the social consequences for being unacceptable would be such an insurmountable source of pain that a teen would seek relief in an act of suicide?

Well, sadly, Shaquille was not alone. According to the Canadian Health Network (Public Health Agency of Canada) approximately 300 youths die annually from suicide, while many more unsuccessfully attempt it. And up to thirty per cent of those deaths will be among members of the gay and lesbian population.

A definition for "cyber-bullying" is: the limitless spreading of frightening, embarrassing or harassing communications and images sent by minors to specifically target other minors. Such communications are posted online, or sent by instant messenger, e-mails, website pages, interactive games, cell phones and other handheld devices, diary sites and online profiles. Cyber-bullying is eerily similar to other forms of bullying since it involves one individual's abuse of power via repetitive hurtful actions and behaviour against another more vulnerable individual so as to intentionally cause emotional pain and suffering. Cyber-bullying can happen instantaneously and anonymously. And it can take place practically anywhere at anytime since adversarial teens appear to be more daring when using the internet than they would normally be in a face to face confrontation.

An extremely disturbing fact is that cyber-bullying is now a common reality among Canadian teens! According to a survey of teens (median age: thirteen to fifteen years) conducted by Kids Help Phone, a charity that provides phone and internet counseling services, seventy-six per cent of the respondents reported that they were called names, while fifty-two per cent reported having rumours spread about them, and thirty-eight per cent reported being threatened. An alarming seventy-seven per cent reported that the cyber-bullies attacked via instant messaging, while thirty-seven per cent reported via email, and thirty-one per cent reported via social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook.

What can be done to stop the madness? An open line of communication is clearly the first and foremost important step required when addressing this painful situation. At the present time some schools already provide anti-bullying programs that promote tolerance, while other schools are in the process of following suit. Thankfully, the most ambitious of those programs actually begin as early as grade six. Also, preventive measures such as an anonymous phone line to report bullying incidents, zero tolerance of bullying on school property and possibly more severe punishments are also under consideration.

But, unfortunately when it comes to Sex Education classes, that open line of communication becomes a tangled web, since very few teachers are willing [or permitted] to address the topic of homosexuality within a classroom environment. So as a result of the curriculum's nearly exclusive emphasis on heterosexuality, gay students remain a misunderstood "hidden demographic" that doesn't receive the proper acknowledgment, or essential information necessary to encourage their healthy sexual development. And unfortunately that grievous wall of silence helps to perpetuate harmful myths and contemptible attitudes that could lead to hatred and bullying.

Even so, today's teenagers cannot arbitrarily lay the blame at someone else's doorstep. They must assume full responsibility for their own actions. They must immediately cease being enemies to each other by remembering that cyberspace is for public consumption, so it's imperative that they respect each other's privacy. They must not retaliate in a jealous rage by carelessly exposing personal video content, or by divulging secretive details, or by spreading unsubstantiated rumours or pernicious lies about one another just to be vindictive or spiteful. Because once such damaging information does hit cyberspace, regardless whether it's true or false, it takes on a life of its own and becomes impossible to stop!

Therefore the time is now for teenagers to increase their self-awareness, and to start protecting each other instead by wrapping up their friend's intimate disclosures concerning a lifestyle choice or a dysfunctional family or feelings of isolation, inadequacy, or any private, personal revelations into a "cyber condom" of honour and trust that will protect those private thoughts from contamination and public exposure. It'll certainly take a gargantuan effort on their part, but let's hope and pray that today's teens prove capable of meeting the extremely difficult challenge of eliminating hate, homophobia and suicide within their ranks. May Shaquille Wisdom rest in peace. ▼

Doug is a busy producer/casting director within the Toronto entertainment industry. He has just been contracted to ghostwrite a book for a locally-based television personality.

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Shawn, Ryan, "Dave Willy"

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Photos by: Perry Mah

A Fabulously Frosh Affair

By David King

Long before Trudeau put up 'do not disturb' signs on our "bedrooms of the nation", Canada's queer student groups were often at the underground forefront of our social life. From Queer McGill's infamous dance nights to groups like the 'Homophile' Associations of University of Toronto or University of Western Ontario, our academic institutions sheltered our "radical" minds when there was virtually nowhere else to turn.

Today, at least seventy-five queer student groups play a part in Canada's extra-curricular education system, or so estimates Kiran Sunar, a former executive member at Queer McGill and a central organizer for the annual Canadian University Queer Services Conference (CUQSC) held this past January in Montréal.

"Some universities are gung-ho about supporting queer services," Sunar comments. "But Queer McGill fought its battles in the 1970s, and some universities are just going through that now".

Working from often abysmal budgets, and the inevitability of fast student turnover in leadership, most queer student associations accept limitations as yet another student learning curve, providing services that enrich the lives of students seeking general information, discussion groups, resources for visitors, on and off campus events, and for some, safety or refuge as students come to terms with their sexuality.

Until a few years ago, a queer student group existed within the world of its own campus. That all changed in 2006, when University of Ottawa student Henry Lau helped coordinate Canada's first CUQSC conference. Aiming for bigger and better, Lau sensed a new need in Canada: the opportunity to share resources and ideas between groups.

"When you live in a centre like Montréal," says Sunar, "you forget there are other places where you can't be gay and go out at night. At McGill and Concordia, one even has access to queer courses, including a Minor in queer studies. We need reminders that, cliché or radical as it might sound, the battle is not over elsewhere".

Considering the differences between an established group like Queer McGill and a seed group in the Yukon, CUQSC appears to be on the right track in assisting start-up groups in more isolated urban centres, not unlike today's Pride organizers in acting responsibly to provide seasoned advice to start-up Pride coordinators.

"It really varies in terms of student group challenges," Sunar describes, "and this conference can really be a microcosm of the world, because you have people in urban centres with no homophobic issues, to the extreme opposite. One can't presume anything, and it's important not to tell organizations how to be run. Even though we're all students, we can't tell a Fort Mac, Alberta group how to get started—but we can share our ideas, what works for us and what doesn't—and go from there".

Following Ottawa and Winnipeg conferences to date, Queer McGill stepped up to the plate to help host a weekend in 2008, yet as Sunar reports, travel was (and continues to be) an enormous challenge for fundraising, while one weekend makes for an awfully crammed visit. Still rallying for resources after three decades, Queer McGill's contribution came with its own limitations, while the words "travel budget" don't even exist in the vocabulary of most small-town groups.

As a result, Sunar has already begun tapping into ideas for resources, volunteers, and fundraisers for 2009, to subsidize more visits at CUQSC events. In an ideal world, she stresses, $30,000 per year would make a night-and-day difference, and while groups like the Student Society of McGill, P-Flag and community sponsors assisted the umbrella group this year, CUQSC has yet to fundraise for 2009, or elect an executive, due to the same challenges in student turnover that face student groups themselves.

"I really hope the budget continues to increase," says Sunar, "along with sponsorship from the educational and queer communities, so that we're able to create active national networking and start institutionalizing the history of these organizations."

The organizer of the 2007 Radical Frosh Weekend (a homecoming treat for queer students), Sunar was careful in mapping out CUQSC's weekend activities, targeting marginalized groups and individuals under the banner "Pride and Peripheries"—the first of what she hopes will be an annual theme. Unusually, larger groups like University of Toronto and University of Ottawa were not in attendance in 2008, while incredibly remote groups made the effort. Providing workshops in self-improvement, pro-activity, conflict resolution, and sensitivity, CUQSC's 2008 keynote address was made by Toronto visitor Rinaldo Walcott, a U of T professor heavily involved in queer and multicultural sociology.

"There is a great sense of empowerment being together," says Sunar, "but what's exciting is that there's the potential for that to happen, too. Everyone has space to talk about what they're doing, creating spaces for questions to be made. It helps us to help each other."

After participating in Winnipeg's 2007 conference, Sunar was excited to see peers from the 'Peg at the 2008 conference, re-affirming previously mentioned needs and ending this year's weekend with 2009 plans. As time and participation unravel, she's entirely positive about the future possibilities that CUQSC can provide as its conference travels. "It is really eye-opening to see how communities are built by exploring the community itself," says Sunar. "We can foster information to be more accessible and reach smaller communities, making us all aware. We live in a world that's global, and that's inevitably going to be the nature of how our knowledge is passed on, whether we believe in globalization or not".

For more information on CUQSC, visit **http://cuqsc.org.** ▼

David King is founding Artistic Director of Montreal's OUT Productions (out.ca), a freelance arts, culture and travel writer, and Contributing Editor of 2B Magazine.

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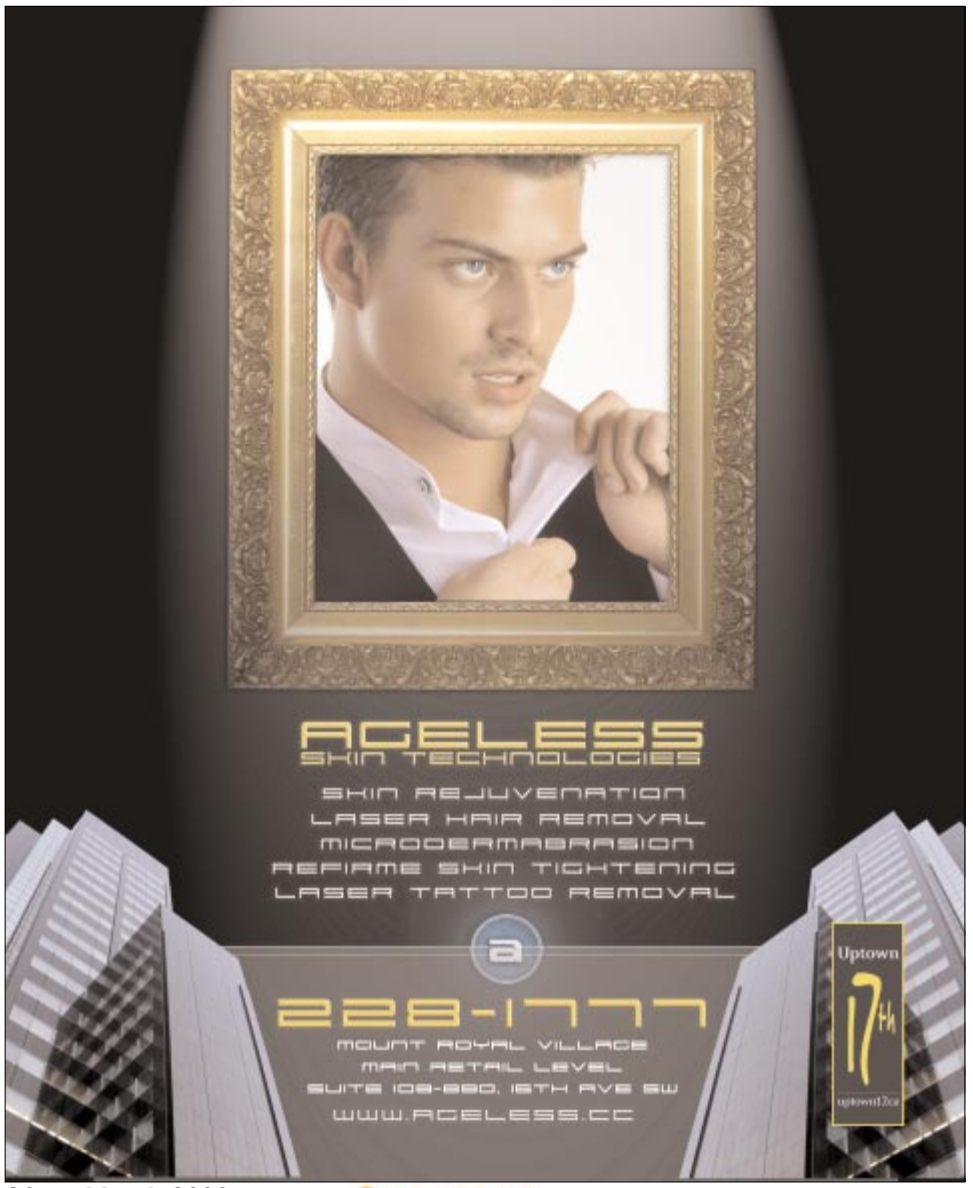

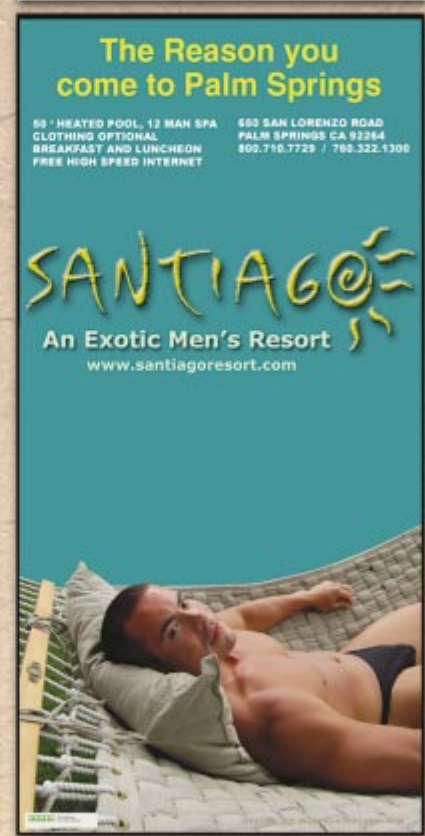

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Finding Our Voice

By Rick Pollard

David L. McIntyre, Artistic Director of Prairie Pride Chorus

Many queer people grow up suffering in silence. For more than eleven years, Regina's Prairie Pride Chorus has helped dozens of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, along with their friends and family, to find their voice.

"A lot of GLBT people, just because of the painful lives we've led in one way or another, lose faith in ourselves," says long-time Chorus member and current committee chair Erin Shoemaker, a retired pastor who understands a thing or two about faith. "Each (choir) director has helped us to find that faith again."

Prairie Pride Chorus was founded in June 2006 at the suggestion of University of Regina professor James McNinch, who had been a member of Saskatoon's Bridge City Chorus and wanted to continue singing. Shoemaker was one of the choir's original members.

The mandate of the group is simple. "We're all here because we love to sing," says Shoemaker. "But we also wanted to find community in places other than bars. The Chorus has done that for us. "

Over the years, the choir's membership has ranged from fifteen to thirty people with roughly equal numbers of men and women. Their conductors have included Vern McCarthy, Lori Erhardt, David McIntyre and most recently, Bev Tillman. The group's repertoire has encompassed a variety of musical genres, including classical music, jazz, show tunes or pop.

The experience has had an undeniable impact on the lives of Chorus members. For many, the experience of singing in front of a live audience provides an enormous boost to their self-confidence. Moreover, Prairie Pride Chorus is not an auditioned choir, meaning that anyone who wants to come and sing is welcome.

"We're not looking for trained voices," insists Shoemaker. "And you don't have to be able to read music. Everyone is welcome." She explains that, in some cases, the choir director teaches theory to new members. Others listen to tapes to learn how to sing a particular piece.

Many queer people find that coming out gives us the courage to do things we once believed were impossible. The chorus has a similar benefit for many frustrated singers.

"A huge percentage of people who say they can't sing are people who were told as a child that they couldn't sing," says Shoemaker. "But I believe everyone can sing." She notes that often it can be as simple as ignoring traditional male and female roles. The chorus has a number of female tenors and for a time, had a male soprano. " People have the freedom in our choir to find their place."

Shoemaker believes that chorus members also learn that it's important to let others find their voice, too. "One of the lessons in being part of a chorus is that it's not all about you. You need to be able to hear the voice on your right and the voice on your left. And you learn something from that."

"The fact is: We're doing this together. There might be solo parts now and then, and some people's voices might be more recognizable because they're better in some sense of the word, but that's not what we're about."

"Every now and then, someone comes into the choir who is really a solo performer. They want to be centre stage. That has its place, but it's not singing in a chorus."

For many, the experience of performing live as part of a queer-identified choir, even one that includes straight friends and family, forces them to confront their lingering fear of being "outed". Shoemaker admits that even she was not entirely immune. "You never lose the knowledge that if someone wants to make an issue of it, they can. So, even for people like myself who have been out for years, it can be quite an experience getting up there on stage for the first time. " Once the initial fears have been conquered, however, the experience of performing live can be both liberating and empowering."

Music may have the power to heal the human spirit but it works better if the music "speaks" to its performers and its audience. Former choir director David McIntyre is a recognized composer in his own right and he grew frustrated by the lack of good material specific to the gay experience. His solution, Watershed Stories, broke new ground for GLBT choirs and became the work for which Prairie Pride Chorus is best known.

McIntyre composed the sixteen songs in Watershed Stories specifically for the Prairie Pride Chorus, and he took pains to ensure that the music would reflect the people being asked to sing it. Chorus members spent a day with a local writer sharing their personal stories, including the experience of coming out, and reflecting on their own lives as queer people living in Regina. The songs in Watershed Stories were based on those interviews.

Each song represents a different stage in the cycle of a queer person's life. Even the musical styles shift from one song to another to reflect life's journey; the first composition in Watershed Stories is a lullaby.

"It really moves people from tears to laughter," observes Shoemaker. Another song, Taunt, evokes the experience of many queer people on the school playgrounds of their childhood. "That was one of the hardest songs to learn," she admits, "and it wasn't because it was the hardest song to learn musically. Most of us cried our way through learning that song."

Another one of the songs reflects on marriage, and its inclusion in the concert illustrates how quickly the lives of people in Canada have changed in recent years. Shoemaker notes that, when the song was written, same sex couples in Canada did not yet have the right to marry. The court decisions that forced the former Liberal government to eventually legalize equal marriage occurred during the five year period that McIntyre composed, and Chorus members learned to perform, Watershed Stories.

The first eight songs, initially performed by the group at the Canadian Choruses Festival 2002 in Toronto, received several standing ovations and critical acclaim. Four years later, the group performed the second half at the next Choruses Festival in Vancouver. Audiences were, once again, electrified. "The effect was absolutely incredible," Shoemaker recalls. "People couldn't believe this little Prairie chorus could do this."

The group also played concerts in the Schumiatcher Theatre at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina. Eventually, they went into a CBC recording studio to record Watershed Stories as an album.

Shoemaker admits that the experience was, at times, intense "We all were, we all still are, amateurs. Most of us hadn't had to do stuff from memory before. But David had such faith in us, and he worked us so hard that each of us learned that we could do this."

After five years of performing Watershed Stories, the group is moving on. McIntyre left the group last spring, and was replaced by Bev Tillman. This year's chorus performances will likely take on a lighter, more playful tone.

The Prairie Pride Chorus has helped Shoemaker and other members to find their own voices. It has also demonstrated to them the benefits of singing, and working, in harmony with others.

" After all," Shoemaker concludes, "What makes great choral music is all of the parts working together really well." ▼

Rick Pollard is a long-time community activist and one of the co-hosts of "Out On the Air", a GLBT program that airs Wednesdays on CJTR community radio in Regina.

Copies of Watershed Stories can be purchased at Bach 'N' Beyond, and at the Regina airport gift shop. CDs may be ordered through the Chorus by sending a cheque or money order for $20 to Prairie Pride Chorus, P.O. Box 33092, Regina, S4T7X2 or online at **prairiepridechorus.com**. Proceeds from the sale of the album, and from Prairie Pride concerts, pay for overhead costs like buying sheet music and for the expense of sending the group to perform at the Canadian Choruses Festival every four years.

The group's annual concert will take place at the Schumiatcher Theatre on April 19th, 2008. The Chorus will also perform during Pride Week celebrations in June, and at a number of other community events.

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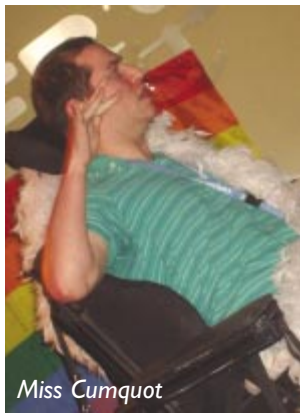
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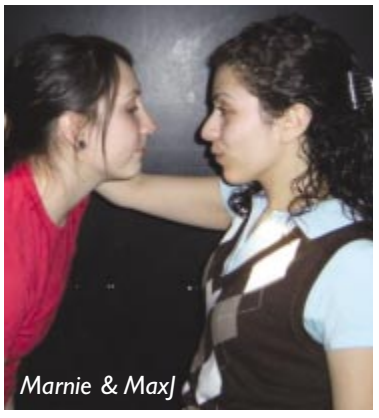
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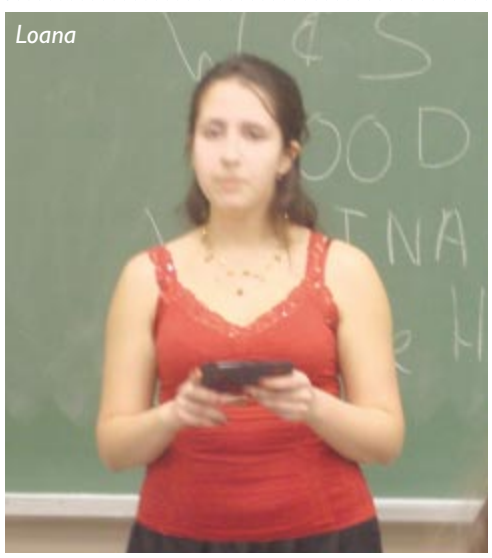
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In Central America the new hot gay destination is Costa Rica, especially the region of Manuel Antonio on the Pacific coast. The temperate year-round climate and gay-friendly Costa Ricans have spurred a new interest by gay travellers from around the world for both vacations and resort property investment. Visiting this coastal region you will learn more about this unspoiled tropical paradise and you will be able to experience the Costa Rica jungles, natural attractions and beaches firsthand.

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The location is a short walk or bus ride to the beach and the Hotel Casa Blanca is close to a variety of international restaurants, shops, bars and cafes. At the resort you can have breakfast in your room or enjoy the poolside honour bar and enjoy a peaceful, relaxing atmosphere. There is also a large sun deck with spectacular views of the ocean, park and beaches. The resort has twenty-four-hour security and offers parking facilities for guests.

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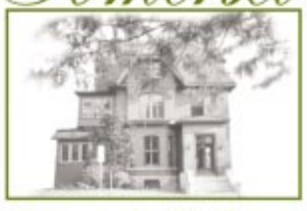

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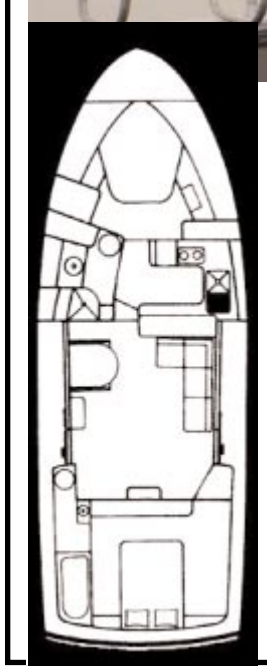

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402 friends

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Young black male, 22, slim build and physicall fit looking to meet GWM between 20 and thirty years old. I need a workout buddy and someone who enjoys outdoor sports. I live in Toronto and want to meet new friends leading to long term relationship. Reply # 0105

Gay, white, male seeks younger Asian gay male for friendship and possible more. Must be interested in movies, books and travel. Preferably age 18 to 35 and physically fit. Send letter and photo to Reply # 1101

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HOROSCOPE

They say March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb. How can that be true? After all, surprising Uranus electrifies lucky Jupiter through the month. So March really comes out loud, proud and queer, just like it should. Amen!

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)
You'll be absolutely prescient when it comes to your career and other professional opportunities this March. Proud Rams seem to just know the who, when, where, why and how of advancement. So why would you possibly consider relaxing now? Get on your hooves and make some major tracks up the ladder. Don't stop until you reach the top. Or do you prefer the bottom?

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)
Grab a few compadres and travel this March. Queer Bulls will do best when they are out on the road with the rest of the herd. If time and money are tight, find social outlets closer to home. There might be a few jolly souls who consider funding your travels. Why not choose one particular well-endowed benefactor to spoil you? Stop when you start to smell.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
Pink Twins can be lured by flattery and sugar and will be tempted to take a leap of faith on the job. Will a certain dalliance turn into something much more ... or much less than expected? Hedge your bets. If you are professionally advancing by way of the casting couch be sure that you are prepared to fluff the pillows every so often. Or is it "get the coffee"?

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)
Relationships will be in for a re-evaluation when March rolls in. Gay Crabs who have found their soulmate should sweep them off their feet and take them away to explore parts unknown. Those Crabs who are scuttling across the floors of silent seas can cast their nets wide and far and catch more than a few beauties. Will you toss a few back and choose just one? Ha!

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)
Proud Lions hate to toil away in obscurity. They would rather become the center of attention and adoration. And so it is in March when you grandstand even in your dreary job. Why fight it? Get out in front and show the office pool how fabulous you are. You never know whose eye you will catch. When charm fails, try to gather hearts and souls with candy or other bribes.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)
Queer Virgins are not known for their cut up personalities but March will make you effusive, creative and very much the party hound. Mark your dance cards and take to the floor. You never know whom you will meet or what can happen. There is a combination of opportunity and luck coming your way. Don't sit at home and warm the couch cushions. Set the town on fire.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)
Your home will become a center of activity this March. First, turn you attention to your "to do" list. Then find new ways to enjoy yourself. Not only can proud Libras accomplish a great deal of home-oriented projects, they can also make it the center of entertainment for their posse and relatives. Okay, if relatives are starting to get on your nerves, make it just the posse.

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)
You'll find ways of making your point as March gives you a warm and welcoming platform from which to orate. Queer Scorps will not only cajole and entice folks from various constituencies, they'll also create a buzz of excitement wherever they roam. Who knows what heights of power you can hit? Try to be the power behind the throne rather than the head despot.

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)
Gay Archers consider buying extra property or pouring a little money into the patch of grass they already own. Not only are you correctly calculating potential income and revenue from your portfolio, you manage to ask the right questions from the right financial advisors. Examine the bottom line and see how big you can make it. The bigger the better, as they say.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)
Make a few stump speeches this March and consider tossing your hat into a particular ring. Not only do you know what the people want, you can make them believe that you are the one to deliver it. If you are thinking of running for office, do so now before those nasty rumors start. Otherwise use your fleeting gift for personal advancement before they catch on to you.

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)
There will be a divine presence around you all March that will clue you into the machinations of others. Good. Your timing is spot on and you can cash in on it. Rely on your intuition and keep your eyes open for great opportunities. Not only will you make strides, you will also make deep imposing tracks. Aqueerians can hit a high note, even if they can't sing.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)
Friends will be your biggest boosters this March. So don't sit at home and wait for the phone to ring. Go through your personal date book and start to connect and reconnect. Get involved in group efforts. Not only will you rise to the top, you will go further in your personal goals than you ever imagined. Make your personal stock into a bull run. Unless of course you prefer bears.

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Lichtenstein's blog www.thestarryeye.typepad.comcovers everything new age. Her astrology book *HerScopes; A Guide To Astrology For Lesbians* is an international sensation. Buy it and feel the vibration.

Euro Sex Party

From: Falcon Studios

Featuring: Anthony Brooks, Tony Magera, Igor Caricote, Steve Hunt, Rod Stevans, Maurizio Mangiati, Peter Shadow, Enrico Bellagio, Claudio Antonelli

Running Time: 160 Minutes

Muscular European Claudio Antonelli is jogging along a trail in the woods when another runner comes up from behind and asks if he can join him. Anthony Brooks lives in the neighborhood and invites Claudio to visit his home the next time he is jogging nearby. Excited with this new prospect, on his next outing Claudio jogs to his new buddy's house—but the gate is locked. Reluctant to leave, he decides to wait across the road in the bushes. He soon spies a parade of attractive hunks meeting at the gate and going inside. His curiosity is aroused as he wonders what could possibly be going on behind those gates. He rings the doorbell and Claudio soon becomes a welcomed guest and participant in this sexual free-for-all that is going on behind closed doors.

The party starts as Tony Magera, Rod Stevans and Anthony Brooks gather by the indoor pool. They waste no time in exploring each other's bodies. Rod readily submits allowing Tony and Anthony to saddle up and take turns demonstrating their superiority. Then Tony submits and Rod and Anthony are merciless and unrelenting, making Tony shudder at their might. Then one by one, they stroke themselves to orgasmic relief.

In the next group action newcomer Enrico Bellagio joins Peter Shadow and Igor Cricote for some sexual antics in the bedroom. Each of these well-hung studs vie for the other's attentions and Enrico soon learns that the newcomer is expected to take it all with dignity and some delight. But not to be outdone, Enrico ends up on top at the very end when his bedmates have had their way and are less energetic.

In another part of this underground playground Muarizio Mangiati and Steve Hunt keep the festivities going as their passions run amok. They kiss and embrace until their orgasms leave them spent and exhausted.

Finally Claudio joins the party with Anthony and Igor delighted to show him the way. These three sex hounds savor each other's ample assets, rendering Claudio delirious with all these robust party favors to play with. Claudio excitedly gets it from his two buddies from both ends and the action only intensifies from there.

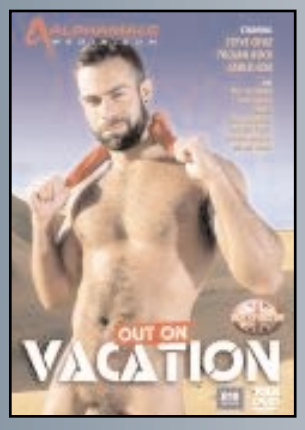
Jogging along the country lanes will never be the same again for Claudio unless his new friend Anthony is home when he passes by.

RATING:
(OUT OF FIVE STARS)

MUSIC:	★★★★
BODIES:	★★★★★
ACTION:	★★★★★½
SETS:	★★★★
STORY:	★★★

Out on Vacation

From: Alpha Male Media



Featuring: Steve Cruz, Trojan Rock, Carlo Cox, Butch Grand, Jake Ryder, Daniel, Dean Monroe, Marcus Troy, Martin Mazza, Dillon Buck

Running Time: 110 minutes

Most Europeans are very familiar with the gay resorts on the Spanish Canary Islands, but for those of us who have yet to experience this gay mecca, renting this movie will make you want to plan a visit this summer. Gran Canaria is the place that Steve Cruz, Dillon Buck and Dane Vega have chosen for their vacation and as soon as they arrive it's obvious just how gay the island really is and what fun lies ahead of them.

When they arrive at their resort, Dillon and Dan want to leave immediately to go and do some cruising in search of hot encounters. But Steve decides he's not going to join them and he stays behind alone at their resort. He wanders into the poolside bar and discovers Jake Ryder and Martin Mazza locked in a warm embrace that holds the promise of much more to come. Steve apologises for the interruption and explains that he's alone and looking for somewhere to go and have fun. The two lovers suggest an ocean cruise and tell him where to find the best captain and boat at the marina.

As soon as Steve heads for the cruise ship the two hot studs embrace again and soon the bar is being used for something other than serving drinks. These two hairy, muscular men are oblivious to their surroundings as they pound away and enjoy each other's bodies. Fortunately, the bar is deserted as all the guests are enjoying the hot sun by the swimming pool while these two are enjoying each other.

When Steve finds the small cruise ship and the captain Trojan Rock, he also discovers he is the only passenger for the afternoon sail around the coastline. This is fine by the captain and they set sail for the ocean cruise. But Steve has a different kind of cruise in mind and Trojan Rock is definitely interested as Steve is massaging the bulge in his Speedos. The captain is quick to drop anchor and enjoy sex on the decks with his only passenger. The two muscular, tattooed bodies intertwine and take advantage of each other's ample endowments as the sun blazes down on their naked forms. Cruising the ocean is definitely the right entertainment for Steve as he enjoys every inch of the captain's manhood and proves he's definitely the first mate on this ship.

The rest of their vacation seems to be non-stop sexual escapades, living up to the reputation enjoyed by Gran Canaria as Europe's gay holiday haven. All of these handsome, muscular and tattooed real men on the island, prove to be perfect playmates for the three vacationers and guarantee they will go home with some big holiday memories.

RATING:
(OUT OF FIVE STARS)

MUSIC:	★★★★
BODIES:	★★★★★
ACTION:	★★★★★
SETS:	★★★★★
STORY:	★★★★

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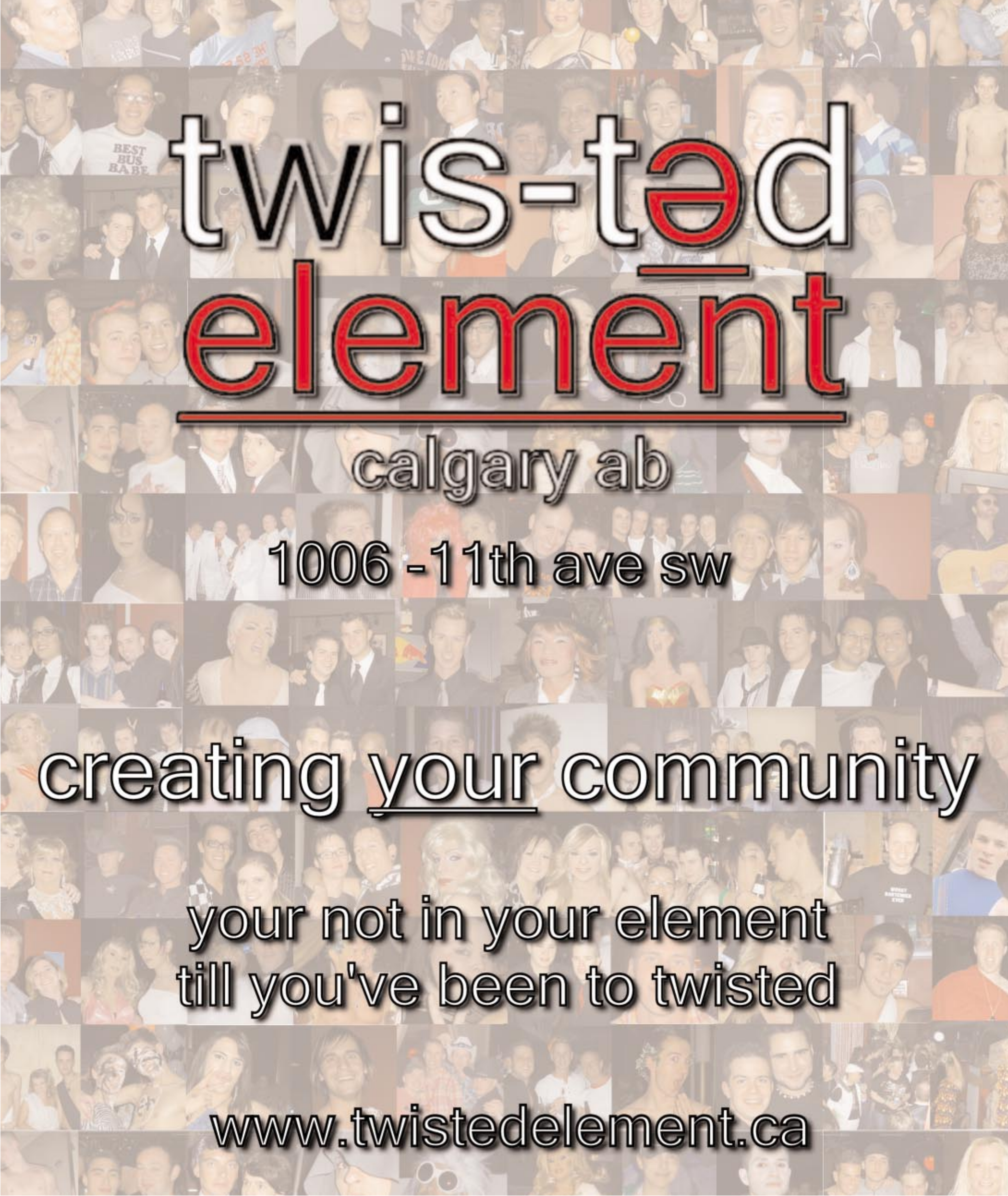
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